THIKRULLAH IN THE MIRROR OF THE SUNNAH

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FOREWORD

While this book has been written in refutation of the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib's booklet, *The Status of Audible Zikr,* the primary benefit of our *Naseehat* (viz. this treatise) is offered on page 339.

From the beginning of this book until page 338 is the Refutation. Those who are not interested in the polemical aspects of the discussion, may dispense with it and turn to page 339 for the brief Summary and for the Masnoon Spiritual Programme which is of vital importance for every Muslim. Minus the practical Spiritual Programme, a close and strong *Nisbat* (Bond) cannot be cultivated with Allah Ta'ala. A Muslim who leads a life without a valid lawful Spiritual Programme, which is a programme devoid of bid'ah, remains mired in confusion and deception. He wastes away his life and will be shocked out of his slumber of *ghaflat* (indifference and oblivion) by the sudden descent of Maut on him.

That ultimate Day will be a Day of supreme regret. In the words of the Qur'aan Majeed it will be a *Day when the hearts and eyes of men will be upturned.*

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INTRODUCTION

This treatise, *THIKRULLAH IN THE MIRROR OF THE SUNNAH,* is a response to a booklet, *The Status of Audible and Collective Zikr in the Light of the Sharee'ah,* authored by Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib, and published by Khanqah Musjid Sheikh Zakariyya. The booklet is a translation of its original Urdu version.

In his booklet, Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib proffers copious arguments and 'proofs' for the permissibility of audible and collective Thikr, which is in refutation of those whom the venerable Mufti Sahib believes are subscribing to an opposite view, namely, impermissibility of *Thikr bil Jahr* and *Ijtima'i Thikr.*

Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib has based his entire response on the misconception that those whom he is refuting believe and propagate that *Thikr bil Jahr* in general *(alal itlaaq)* is not permissible. In fact, the tenor of his refutation evinces the inference that his opponents in this sphere are denying the very validity of Thikrullaah. Hence, he devoted 13 pages of his booklet to the *'Benefits of Zikr'*, as if those whom he is refuting do not believe in *Thikrullaah.* Insha'Allah, this aspect will be further addressed in the ensuing pages.

While the august Mufti Sahib has prepared his refutation, he meandered off at a wide tangent from the actual contention of those who are perceived to be in total denial of *Thikr Jahr* (audible Thikr). The booklet of the Mufti Sahib does not in any way whatsoever answer the charge or the contention of those who claim that the **customary innovated collective loud Thikr programmes conducted in the Musaajid are *bid'ah*,**

hence not permissible. The venerable Mufti Sahib has responded to an imaginary contention which is not what is being propagated by those who are targeting the new Bareilwi-cum- Deobandi bid'ah, namely the *specific form (Hait-e-Kathaaiyah)* of Thikr programmes which have of recent become customary in the Musaajid in some places.

Whereas Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib discusses and substantiates the *fadheelat* (significance and benefit) of *mutlaq* (general) *Thikrullah,* the other party is in condemnation of the *specific forms* of innovated Thikr practices which have no basis and no origin in the Sunnah. The honourable Mufti Sahib has argued like a person who presents copious proofs to substantiate the validity, permissibility and great significance of *Mutlaq Salaat* in refutation of one who avers that Salaat at the time of Zawwaal is not permissible, and Nafl Salaat in jamaa't (for Hanafis) is not permissible, and Janaazah Salaat (for Hanafis) is not permissible in the Musjid, and Nafl Salaat after the Fardh of Asr is not permissible. In refutation of this contender, copious arguments proving the validity, significance and benefits of Salaat in general are presented. Everyone will understand the incongruency of the refutation and the misdirection of the arguments which do not in any way whatsoever refute the contention that Salaat at the time of Zawwaal, etc. is not permissible.

Insha'Allah, in this treatise we shall, with the *taufeeq* of Allah Ta'ala, elaborate on the error of the venerable Mufti Sahib, and the futility of his exercise which does not deal with the contention that the customary forms of *Thikr Jahr* programmes which have surfaced recently in some Musaajid in South Africa are bid'ah and not permissible. While the Mufti Sahib has adduced evidence for the imperative need, significance and benefit of Masnoon forms

of Thikr and for Mutlaq Thikr, he has failed to accredit the new Thikr customs with any Shar'i substantiation. The contention of the other party thus remains unassailed, vindicated and fully condoned by the Shariah.

THE BASIS FOR THE AHKAAM OF THE SHARIAH

The Qur'aan Majeed is categorical in stating the completion and perfection of the Shariah during the very age of *Risaalat* (i.e. the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Thus Allah Azza Wa Jal declaring this eternal truth, says:

"This day have I perfected for you your Deen, and completed for you My Favour, and chosen for you Islam as the Deen."

(Aayat 3, Surah Al-Maaidah)

The basis for *all* the Ahkaam (Laws) of the Shariah is encapsulated in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, the systems of Ijma' (Consensus) and Qiyaas (the Shariah's process of analogical deduction) being divisions of the former two primary Sources of the Shariah. Thus, any act to be mounted on the pedestal of *Ibaadat* has to necessarily emanate from the two primary Sources of the Deen – the Qur'aan and Sunnah. An act which has no origin in the Qur'aan and Sunnah is not an act of Ibaadat regardless of its outer 'ibaadat' veneer and imagined benefits. An act which does not emanate from the Sunnah, irrespective of its external adornment and seemingly pious appearance, is not ibaadat. It is bid'ah – bid'ah sayyiah (evil bid'ah) which distorts and displaces the Sunnah.

Stressing the perfection and completion of the Deen, which is declared in the abovementioned Qur'aanic verse, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"Whatever is innovated into this Amr (Deen) of ours what is not of it, verily, it is rejected."

"The worst of things are new practices (innovated into the Deen). Every bid'ah is dhalaalah (deviation)."

The Ahaadith severely condemning bid'ah and its innovators are numerous and well-known to even the Ulama who seek to justify new practices presented in the form of ibaadat.

The unlawful and abominable *bid'ah* which is proscribed in the Hadith refers to practices which are given the form of ibaadat (worship) while in reality there is no origin and no basis in the Sunnah for such innovations. The dispute with the votaries of the unsubstantiated specific forms of Thikr is in this area. The dispute does not centre around *Mutlaq Thikr* (Thikr in general) nor to any Masnoon acts of Thikr, whether *Sirri* (silent) or *Jahri* (audible). There is no dispute on this issue. The argument pertains to the specific forms (*hait-e-kathaiyyah)* for which the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib has not presented even one Hadith in substantiation as shall be seen as we progress in this discussion.

The many Ahaadith and Qur'aanic verses proffered by him, relate to *Mutlaq Thikr*, not to innovated forms of congregational acts given the form of ibaadat, when in actual fact these practices are not Masnoon acts of ibaadat.

Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib has endeavoured to prove the validity of the current forms of congregational Thikr which have developed only recently in the Muslim community of South Africa. From the early 1960's the Akaabir Ulama of Deoband began visiting South Africa. Many seniors graced the shores of this country with just one mission – the mission to morally and spiritually uplift the Muslim community. They concentrated on imparting the *Uswah-e-Hasanah* (Beautiful life pattern) of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). They expounded the true meaning of Tasawwuf. They were embodiments of the Sunnah. They were always in the frontline fighting the evil of bid'ah in which the Ahl-e-Bareilwi (the grave-worshippers) excel.

After the era of the Akaabireen closed with their departure from this earthly abode, some comparatively junior Ulama arrived and in stark contrast with the direction of the Akaabireen, initiated practices akin to the innovations of the Bareilwi group. This has brought us to the current trend of congregational *halqah* Thikr sessions in the cosmopolitan Musaajid which are frequented by Muslims of all Math-habs and Maslaks.

Practices which have no relationship with the Sunnah – practices which are not Masnoon acts of Ibaadat – practices which the Auliya had introduced as spiritual remedies and meant for execution in the privacy of the khaanqah or the Khaanqah-Musjid or the home – have been promoted to the pedestal of the Sunnah and are staunchly adhered to, and even given greater importance and preference than the actual Masnoon acts of Ibaadat.

To the uninitiated and the unwary musallis of different persuasions, groups of people sitting in the Musjid

swaying their heads violently from side to side, chanting Thikr in chorus, and spreading white sheets for Thikr purposes, even right at the entrance of the Musjid to deter musallis from leaving, convey the impression of some puja-cult in operation. These practices did not exist in South Africa in that segment of the community following the Akaabir of Deoband. These are recent accretions of bid'ah enacted in emulation of the Bareilwi Qabar Puja group.

Now the dispute pertains to these queer acts of Thikr which have no basis in the Sunnah. The dispute has no relationship with *Mutlaq Thikr* although the venerable Mufti Sahib's booklet endeavours to create the idea that those who are opposing the bid'ah programmes are anti-Thikr. Therefore, the venerable Mufti Sahib's booklet of Thikr is misdirected and discusses a subject entirely different and apart from what the other party is contending.

In order to substantiate the contended validity of the specific forms of congregational Thikr in vogue, it devolves on the honourable Mufti Sahib to present Ahaadith, and moreover, unambiguous rulings of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen such as Imaam Abu Hanifah, Imaam Abu Yusuf, Imaam Muhammad (rahmatullah alayhim) and others of such calibre, which deal precisely with these forms of congregational Thikr in the same way as precise Ahaadith and categorical rulings of the Fuqaha could be cited to substantiate the validity of Tahyatul Wudhu, Awwaabeen, Dhuha, Tahajjud, Taraaweeh, Mutlaq Thikr, the Masnoon Thikr Bil Jahr, Athaan, Iqaamah, Takbeer Tashreeq, etc., etc.

If a zealous buzrug in this day begins to impart the lesson of reciting *Subhaanallaah* 1000 times after every Fardh Salaat and 50 raka'ts Tahajjud, and he advocates it for universal and collective practice, basing his case on the Ahaadith which exhort Thikr and Nafl Salaat in general, then it will be justified to brand the buzrug as a bid'ati for exceeding the bounds of the Shariah and for diverting from the Sunnah. To propagate an act as being ibaadat, a precise basis in the Sunnah is imperative. If there is no precise basis, such an act will never be an ibaadat which could be imposed on the community nor should it be promoted in a manner to convey the impression to unwary and ignorant persons that this new act is an act of Ibaadat ordered by the Shariah.

This is what is gradually happening to the current innovations of congregational Thikr taking place in the Musaajid.

The Mufti Saheb has laboured in vain to structure from the Qur'aan and Sunnah a basis for the innovation of the specific forms of congregational Thikr. Neither the Qur'aanic verses nor the Hadith narrations which he has presented constitute a basis for the specific forms of Thikr. The Aayaat and the Ahaadith which the Mufti Sahib has presented have no relevance to the current forms of congregational, loud Thikr programmes conducted in some Musaajid.

WHAT IS BID'AH?

Prior to dealing with the proofs presented by the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib, there is a need to explain the Shar'i concept of *Bid'ah.* The unwary people lacking this understanding are quickly swayed by

arguments which exercise an appeal on their emotions. What is wrong if we remember Allah in the Musjid? There are innumerable rewards and benefits in Thikr? Arguments of this type are ploys of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah, notably the Bareilwi group. It is therefore necessary to explain in the light of the Sunnah what is sometimes wrong with even Thikr, salaat and acts which are peddled as ibaadat.

(1) Once a man during the age of the Sahaabah was about to perform Nafl Salaat in the Eidgah before the Eid Salaat. Hadhrat Ali (radhiyallahu anhu) prevented him. The man retorted: "O Ameerul Mu'mineen! I am fully aware that Allah Ta'ala will not punish one for performing Salaat." He had failed to understand the purport of Hadhrat Ali's prohibition. Hadhrat Ali (radhiyallahu anhu) responded: "I am fully aware that Allah Ta'ala does not reward for any act (of ibaadat) which was not done by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) nor exhorted by him. This Salaat of yours is futile, and futility (in ibaadat) is haraam. Perhaps Allah Ta'ala will punish you for its perpetration because of your conflict with His Nabi." (Majmaul Bahrain – Majaalisul Abraar)

What is wrong with Nafl Salaat? Hadhrat Ali (radhiyallahu anhu) saw considerable wrong in the *specific form* of Nafl Salaat which the man had contemplated, hence he averred the probability of Allah's punishment for performing that specific Salaat. It will now be puerile and deviation for anyone to present Ahaadith mentioning the virtues of Nafl Salaat in a bid to justify Nafl Salaat at times and occasions prohibited by

the Shariah. Such Nafl Salaat comes within the ambit of *bid'ah.*

(2) Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) heard his son reciting *Bismillaah* audibly in Salaat before Surah Faatihah. He said: 'O my son! Beware of innovation (bid'ah)." His son said: "I did not see anyone among the Ashaab of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who abhorred bid'ah more than him." Hadhrat Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) added: "Verily, I performed Salaat with the Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), with Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu anhu), with Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) and with Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhu), but I did not hear anyone of them reciting it (Tasmiah). Therefore, do not recite it. When you perform Salaat, then say: *"Alhamdulillah Rabbil Aalameen."*

The Sahaabi immediately reprimanded his son for reciting *Bismillah* audibly in Salaat. Such recitation was bid'ah to him. *Bismillah* is an aayat of the Qur'aan Shareef. So what is wrong if someone recites an aayat of the Qur'aan Shareef audibly in Salaat? It is wrong because Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not recite it in this manner, and the Sahaabah emulated the example of their Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in exactitude. Any excess was branded bid'ah.

(3) Hadhrat Naafi' (radhiyallahu anhu) said: "A man who sneezed near to Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) said: *"Alhamdullillah was Salaam ala Rasulillaah."* Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) said: "Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not

teach us like this. He taught us to say: *'Alhamdulillaahi ala kulli haalin.'"* So what is wrong if someone recited Salaam on Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? Why did this noble and great Sahaabi reprimand the person who recited Salaam on our Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? Since reciting Salaam on our Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) on the specific occasion of sneezing is an accretion to the Masnoon *Hamd* (Alhamdulillah), it was prohibited by the Sahaabi. Such an accretion is bid'ah. It will now be absurd to justify reciting Durood and Salaam at all times and occasions by citing the Ahaadith which exhort Durood and mention its abundant virtues.

(4) Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Zubair (radhiyallahu anhu) saw a man lifting his hands in dua during the Q'adah position of Salaat. He said that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would not raise his hands in dua during Salaat. It will be incorrect to cite Ahaadith teaching the method of lifting hands to justify this practice during Salaat. Raising the hands in dua during the Qa'dah position in Salaat is bid'ah.

The aforementioned episodes should be adequate for understanding that *Bid'ah* is the introduction in Islam of an unsubstantiated act/practice. There is no evidence for it in the Kitaab and Sunnah. Such acts transform the Deen into a new cult, hence perpetrators of Bid'ah will be buffeted away from *Haudh-e-Kauthar* by the Malaaikah and even by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) on the Day of Qiyaamah. Hadhrat Sahl Bin Sa'd (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated: *"Rasulullah (sallallahu*

alayhi wasallam) said: 'I shall be the first at the Haudh. Whoever passes by me will drink from the Haudh, and whoever drinks (from it) will never again become thirsty...... Then some groups will approach. I shall recognize them, and they will recognize me. (However) a barrier will develop between me and them. I will say: 'They are from me." It will be said: 'You do not know what they had innovated after you." Then I shall say to those who had wrought changes (in my Deen) after me: 'Begone! Begone!"

Those who had introduced changes in the Deen with their bid'ah practices will be deprived of the great fortune of Rasulullah's companionship in Qiyaamah. *"Every bid'ah is dhalaalah (deviation), and every act of deviation will be in the Fire",* said Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Bid'ah is the destruction of Islam, hence Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"Whoever honours a man of bid'ah has aided (the process of) destroying Islam." (Mishkaat)* Bid'ah is not a trivial crime. It has far reaching evil consequences which uproot the Deen. The Sahaabah were extremely cautious with regard to innovation. Once someone invited a few persons for a feast on the occasion of the circumcision of his son. The Sahaabah objecting said that during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) there existed no such functions.

Commenting on the evil of *bid'ah,* Imaam Ghazaali (rahmatullah alayh) said: "If you do an act (of ibaadat) without the command of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and without following him (in an act), then you have committed a sinful act even if such act is in the form of ibaadat." *(Extract from Fataawa Rahimiyyah)*

Hadhrat Sufyaan Thauri (rahmatullah alayh) said that of all sins, Iblees loves *Bid'ah* the most. Sinful acts produce

regret and remorse which constrain Muslims to repent. But *bid'ah* is regarded as 'ibaadat', hence the perpetrators of innovations are deprived of Taubah. It is therefore mentioned in the Hadith: *"Verily, Allah deprives every person of bid'ah from Taubah."* Why would a bid'ati hasten to Taubah when he believes that his acts of bid'ah are ibaadat?

It is mentioned in *Majaalisul Abraar* that Shaitaan said: "I have broken the back of the progeny of Aadam with sins. They broke my back with Taubah and Istighfaar. I then invented for them such a sin for which they do not repent. These are acts of bid'ah in the guise of ibaadat."

Durood Shareef is a highly meritorious act of ibaadat. Innumerable virtues of Durood Shareef are mentioned in the Ahaadith. Durood Shareef is an established Masnoon act. Besides the Durood formulae which were taught by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and adhered to by the Sahaabah, there exists a plethora of other duroods compiled centuries after Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Now why would a devotee of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) accord preference to a durood over and above the Durood formulae which were taught by Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and recited in profusion by the Sahaabah? Discussing this topic, Fatawa Rahimiyyah states:

"The words of Durood Taaj are neither from the Qur'aan nor from the Hadith. It was not the practice of the Sahaabah, Taabieen and Salf-e-Saaliheen. Durood Taaj was introduced centuries later. A new durood cannever be compared to the Durood which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) taught to the Sahaabah. .... It appears in the Hadith Shareef that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) taught a Dua to a Sahaabi. In the Dua appears the word *'Nabiyika'*. The Sahaabi, out of greater respect and honour, recited

'Rasoolika'. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) immediately stopped him and instructed him to recite, *'Nabiyika'*.

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) stressed the recitation of the very word, namely *Nabi,* in the context of the Dua. He disallowed substitution with the word, *Rasool.*

There is considerable emphasis in the Ahaadith on observance of originality in ibaadat practices. Diversion from the original ibaadat practices is not condoned in the Shariah. New forms of Thikr eventually develop into hardcore bid'ah which distorts and displaces the Sunnah. The original Sunnah is lost in the labyrinth of innovations irrespective of the sincerity with which the unsubstantiated 'ibaadat' practices were introduced and regardless of the imagined or perceived benefits.

HADHRAT MUFTI SHAFI'S COMMENTS ON BID'AH

Everyone is aware of the importance of Dua. Kitaabs have been compiled on the virtues and benefits of Dua. Everyone is free to make Dua at any time and as much as the heart desires. But when this laudable practice is cloaked with a specific form and given congregational status in the Musjid, then this very meritorious ibaadat is transformed into *Bid'ah Sayyiah* (Evil Innovation). The following question was posed to Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi (rahmatullah alayh):

"Is it an act of thawaab to collectively make dua after the Sunnats on Fridays? What is the harm in making such dua? How is it to criticize those who do not participate in this dua?" Hadhrat Mufti Shafi (rahmatullah alayh) answered:

"Understand well that no one has the right to increase or delete from the established *Ahkaam* of the Shariah. Hundreds of thousands of Sahaabah who sacrificed their lives for acts of thawaab never engaged in such a congregational dua nor did they teach it. Now who are we who imply by our action that we are correcting the error of such great sages of the Deen (the Sahaabah, Taabieen, etc.)? The implication is that we are superseding them in the pursuit of thawaab by indulging in this bid'ati dua which is considered an incumbent obligation and the spirit of Imaan.

Indeed our inverted and noxious intelligence is lamentable. We criticize, condemn and curse those who abstain from bid'ah. In so doing we ourselves become the accursed ones. It is improper to practise even acts of thawaab beyond the confines of the Shariah………….. After the Dua made after the Fardh, the relationship between the Imaam and Muqtadis terminates. One is free to perform the Sunnat Salaat in the Musjid or at home as was the practice of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the majority of the Sahaabah.

It is bid'ah for the Imaam to make dua after the Sunnats. It is not permissible and the prohibition is emphasised. It is ignorance to criticize those who do not participate. It is mischief, strife, injustice and sinful…………… Bear in mind the Ahaadith of Rasulullah (in which bid'ah is condemned). He said that every bid'ah is deviation, and deviation leads to the Fire. Therefore always abstain from bid'ah." *(Najaatul Muslimeen)*

The new *Thikr Jahri* programmes executed congregationally in the Musaajid, accompanied by head-

swinging movements are comparable to the second innovated dua which Hadhrat Mufti Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) and 100% of the Aakaabir Ulama of Deoband branded bid'ah. In fact, the dua has some resemblance to the Sunnah, whereas these *specific forms* of Thikr have no resemblance whatsoever with the Sunnah.

The uninitiated, those unrelated to any of the Sufi Silsilas, those of different Deeni persuasions, the growing up generation of children, the ignorant and the unwary are misled or thrown into a quandary by these Thikr performances unsubstantiated by the Sunnah. The children observing these daily public displays and performances and the unwary and ignorant who have some *ta-alluq* (relationship) and respect for the Ulama who engage in these bid'ah practices, gradually gain the idea that these acts are Masnoon ibaadat ordered by the Shariah. This impression will become ingrained in their minds and in this way hardcore bid'ah customs and practices develop.

Those Ulama of our School of thought who indulge in these public Thikr performances are degenerating into the very same rut of bid'ah in which the Bareilwis are mired. If this trend continues, a time will soon dawn when Deobandi bid'atis and Bareilwi bid'atis will merge into an indistinguishable sect of bid'ah. They will then constitute one homologeous bid'ah sect.

Non-participants are frowned on. Indirect pressure is applied on uncommitted musallis to participate. The claim that there is no such pressure is simply not true. Many musallis complain of the frowning brows and the queer stares which are directed at them. In fact, in at least one Musjid in Johannesburg, those who perform the

Khatm-e-Khwaajgaan ritual which has no relationship with the Sunnah, and which has already entered the domain of bid'ah due to the pedestal of near-incumbency to which it has been elevated, spread a white sheet right at the entrance of the Musjid to deter musallis from leaving. This is truly *zulm* and *jahaalat* of the worst kind.

The unwary and simple-minded musallis are given the idea that it will be 'kufr' and 'shirk' to tramp on the 'holy shroud' around which the 'dervishes' have gathered to execute their ritual performance. And, if a musalli should dare to tramp on the shroud in a bid to escape, he is too cognizant of the consequences. The reaction of the 'dervishes' will be a replica of the attitude which the Qabar Pujaari bid'atis usually exhibit towards Deobandis who do not participate in their bid'ah customs and puja rituals.

The arguments presented by the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib have no relationship with the *specific forms* of the Thikr rituals which are being practised in the Musaajid. The charge of bid'ah thus remains unchanged and unchallenged. Let us now deal with his arguments.

MUFTI RADHAAUL HAQ'S ARGUMENTS

(1) Thikr – Just any Form?

On page 8, the venerable Mufti Sahib states: *"There is also no doubt in the fact that zikr, no matter what form it may be, is the backbone and one of the main objectives of Tasawwuf."*

In fact *Thikrullaah* is the *Maqsad* (Objective) of life on earth. Allah Ta'ala has created man and jinn for only His *Thikr* (Remembrance). There is no other objective of our sojourn here on earth. Thikr is not only the "backbone and one of the main objectives of Tasawwuf", it is in fact the *only* objective of Tasawwuf. All practices, acts, and methods of Tasawwuf are secondary and designed for the purpose of achieving the Objective which Allah Ta'ala states with clarity in the Qur'aan Majeed: "I have not created jinn and man, but for (the purpose) of worshiping Me."

While the importance of Thikr cannot be overstated or exaggerated, it is incorrect to claim that "zikr, no matter what form it may be', is desirable and commanded by the Shariah. If Thikr is performed in emulation of the ways and styles of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah, then such forms will be bid'ah and shunned, and if they happen to be among the Mustahab or Mandoob categories of the Shariah, which have been elevated to Wujoob (incumbency) then too, the Shariah orders abandonment of the meritorious practice whose origin is well-grounded in the Sunnah.

The Fuqaha have evolved the principle: *When a Mustahab is assigned a higher status, it becomes*

Makrooh. "Verily, *Mandoob* becomes *Makrooh* (prohibited) when there is fear of it being elevated to a rank higher than its status….. In fact some Fuqaha issued the fatwa of prohibition when fasting the *Ayyaam-e-Beedh* (13th, 14th and 15th of the month) which became so widely prevalent that it raised the fear of the belief of *Wujoob* (compulsion) developing. They issued this Fatwa notwithstanding the fact that fasting on these days is Mustahab. Numerous Ahaadith are narrated in this regard. Now what is your opinion regarding *Mubah* (permissible acts which are elevated to incumbency, and, what is your opinion regarding detestable practices (being elevated)?" *(Majmaul Bihaar from Majlisul Abraar)*

In this regard, the following explanation is given in Fataawa Rahimiyyah, Page 305, Vol. 2:

"It is Mustahab to begin from the right side in good acts. However, when Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) observed during his time that this was developing into a Waajib act, he decreed it to be Makrooh. Ibnul Muneer said in this regard: 'Verily Mandoob acts sometimes become Makrooh when it (Mustahab/Mandoob) is elevated above its status. (Beginning from the) right is Mustahab in all acts of ibaadat. But when Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) feared that people will believe it to be compulsory, then he indicated its *Karaahat*. And Allah knows best."

(Fathul Baari Sharh Bukhaari)

"Every *Mubah* (permissible act) which leads to this, is Makrooh." *(Majaalisul Abraar)*

A unanimous principle of Fiqh is that when a Mustahab is elevated above its status then it becomes Makrooh.

Even if the belief and intention of someone (who indulges in the act) is not erroneous, then too, because of the fear of the belief of others becoming corrupt and because of the resemblance with the Ahl-e-Bid'ah, it (the permissible or Mustahab practice) will be prohibited. Imaam Ghazaali (rahmatullah alayh) said: "When a Sunnat becomes a salient (distinguishing) feature of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah, then we order its abandonment for fear of resembling them." (Ihyaaul Uloom)

Thikr in "just any form" is not acceptable. With regard to forms of Thikr, the methods instructed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and practised by the Sahaabah have priority and permanency. Any other new form, be it of the *Mubah* category, cannot displace the Masnoon forms of Thikr. A *Mubah* form which is elevated above its permissible status is transformed into *Bid'ah Sayyiah*. The reward (thawaab) for Masnoon *Athkaar (forms of Thikr)* cannot be acquired from *Mubah* types of Thikr which have no origin in the Sunnah. If a *Mubah* or even a Mustahab form resembles a salient feature of the practices of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah, then such form of Thikr has to be incumbently set aside in terms of the principles of the Shariah.

A form of Thikr such as loud Thikr which disturbs others is not permissible. Thus it is not permissible tomake loud Thikr in the Musjid nor recite Qur'aan Shareef loudly if others are engaging in Salaat or if it disturbs the sleep of those in I'tikaaf. Those who participate in loud congregational Thikr in the Musaajid

are becoming incrementally indifferent to the rights and convenience of others who engage in Sunnat or Nafl Salaat or in their own acts of silent Thikr and tilaawat. They conduct themselves as owners of the Musjid with no care for the *huqooq* (rights) of the other musallis.

It is important to understand that the Musaajid in this country are cosmopolitan. They are attended by the public at large. The Musaajid here are not small village or *khaanqah* Musjids where the writ of the Shaikh of the area holds sway. Such small and special Musjids are generally the preserve of the mureedeen of the Shaikh. It is not permissible to infringe on the rights of the other musallis by imposing practices and performances which may initially have been *Mubah*, but which have become *Bid'ah* due to transgression of the limits. The Musaajid in South Africa are not private *khaanqahs.* Even in *khaanqahs* where adherence to the Sunnah dominates, there are rules and regulations governing the *Mubah* Thikr forms introduced as spiritual remedies.

The Mashaaikh did not introduce their specific forms of *athkaar* to displace the Sunnah forms of *Athkaar*, nor did they pass off these *Mubah* forms of Thikr as Masnoon acts of ibaadat. But today, these innovated *specific forms* of Thikr, unsubstantiated by the Sunnah are accorded primary importance.

Any form of Thikr has to be examined in the light of the Sunnah. Provided that there are no accretions which conflict with the Shariah, the new form will be *Mubah*.

(2) The Qur'aan and Thikr

The honourable Mufti Sahib enumerates 15 Qur'aanic verses to highlight the status of Thikr. However, not a

single one of these verses remotely deals with the topic which the Mufti Sahib has undertaken to espouse, namely *loud and collective Thikr in the Musjid.* The Aayaat refer to *Mutlaq Thikr* – Thikr in general which is the objective of man's sojourn on earth. While the dispute pertains to the *special forms of non-Sunnah Thikr rituals,* the Qur'aanic verses exhort Thikr in general or to make Thikr in the manner in which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and his Sahaabah used to make Thikr.

There is absolutely no basis in the cited verses nor anywhere else in the Qur'aan Majeed for vindicating the *special forms* of innovated Thikr gatherings which are now developing into *Bid'ah.* Just as our Bareilwi brethren have no right to cite the Qur'aan in substantiation of their many bid'ah Thikr and other programmes, so too may our Deobandi brethren not cite the Qur'aan in their attempt to 'prove' validity for their *forms of Thikr* gone haywire in emulation of the Bareilwi bid'atis.

Those who are refuting the *special forms* of Thikr programmes which are being conducted in the Musaajid do not trade their Imaan for kufr by contending that *Thikr is haraam or bid'ah.* What they are saying is plain and simple: Your specific forms of non-Sunnah Thikr are now crossing the threshold of permissibility and entering into the domain of *Bid'ah.* Hence, the presentation of Qur'aanic verses to bolster these new forms of Thikr is a redundant and a diversionary exercise which does not assist the case of the venerable Mufti Sahib.

The virtues, significance, importance, benefits and indispensability of *Thikrullaah* as imparted by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are accepted and believed to be the Soul of Imaan and the basis of Najaat and Falaah.

But participation in the *specific forms* which have no sanction in the Sunnah is not a requirement for engagement in the constant and perpetual *Thikr* commanded by the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

(3) The Hadith and Thikr

In his discussion pertaining to the virtues of Thikr in the light of the Ahaadith, Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib has enumerated 20 Hadith narrations which all mention *Mutlaq Thikr*, not the new *specific forms* which are being propagated nowadays. None of the Ahaadith substantiates the case of the participants in collective loud Thikr in public places (the Musaajid), nor does any of these narrations refute the contention of those who criticize the innovated forms of Thikr.

The virtues of Thikr in general are extolled in the Ahaadith cited by the Mufti Sahib. But the dispute is on another turf. The virtues, excellence and imperative need of perpetual Thikr (24 hours of the day and night) are not being contested. The refutation is directed at the *specific forms* of non-Sunnah practices which are developing into hardcore *bid'ah.*

(4) The Status of Collective Thikr

In support of the *specific forms of non-Sunnah* Thikr which were unknown to the Sahaabah, the Mufti Sahib presents the following Hadith:

"Hazrat Abu Hurairah (Radiyallahu anhu) and Hazrat Abu Saeed (Radiyallahu anhu) bear testimony to having heard Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) say: "Whenever a group of people gather to remember Allah Ta'ala, the angels surround them, mercy enshrouds them,

tranquillity descends upon them and Allah Ta'ala mentions them in the presence of angels." (Muslim)

Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib proffers the following commentary for this Hadith:

"The virtues of the gatherings of zikr are shown in this Hadith. This proves the permissibility of collective zikr. Generally loud or audible zikr takes place when people congregate. Silent zikr outwardly has no relation with a gathering. Hence this Hadith indicates towards audible zikr."

The venerable Mufti Sahib has stretched his imagination excessively in the endeavour to justify the *specific forms of Thikr* which are being disputed. As far as the 'virtues of gatherings of zikr' are concerned, there is no problem and no dispute. But his claim: *"Generally loud or audible zikr takes place when people congregate'*, and his claim: *"Silent zikr outwardly has no relation with a gathering"*, are refuted. His conclusion: *"Hence this Hadith indicates towards audible zikr"*, based on the two spurious aforementioned claims is likewise spurious and baseless.

What is the proof to substantiate the first premises cited by the Mufti Sahib? Besides this being his personal opinion, there is no evidence to back up this spurious opinion. It is incorrect to aver that when people congregate for Ibaadat or Thikr, then generally loud Thikr takes place. Millions of Muslims gather and congregate in the Musaajid five times a day for Salaat. The Jamaa't which has gathered for Salaat is a congregation of *Thaakireen* (people who make Thikr). The Qur'aan describing Salaat, says: "*.....And establish Salaat. Verily*

Salaat prevents from immorality and evil. And the Thikr of Allah is the greatest." (Surah Ankabut, aayat 45)

Salaat is the highest form of Thikr (Remembrance of Allah Ta'ala). Musallis in a Musjid constitute a 'gathering' when they perform the Fardh in jamaa't and even when they perform their Sunnat and Nafl individually. The musallis, scattered all over the Musjid, some engaging in Nafl Salaat, some in silent Tilaawat, some in silent Thikr, some in silent Dua and some in Muraaqabah (contemplation), all together constitute a gathering which comes within the context of the Hadith.

The validity of a gathering/congregation is not reliant on all members of the gathering raising their voices in chorus and chanting in unision. This is a fallacious idea posited as a requisite for the validity of a gathering. There is no basis for this contention of the Mufti Sahib.

All the Muqtadis standing behind the Imaam are silent and during Zuhr and Asr even the Imaam is silent, and in every other Salaat, besides Fajr, the Imaam too is silent in the last two raka'ts. There is thus a valid congregation performing *Thikrullaah* of the highest category collectively without audibility/loudness. There is no collective chanting and no loud Thikr, yet this jamaa't is a noble congregation about which the cited Hadith states: *"the angels surround, them, mercy enshrouds them, tranquillity descends upon them and Allah Ta'ala mentions them in the presence of the angels"*.

The musallis joining in the ostensibly *Ijtimaai'* silent dua after every Fardh Salaat, constitute a valid gathering engaging in Thikrullaah. Everyone engages in his own silent dua despite being a member of the Jamaa't.

It is absurd to restrict these transcendental virtues and benefits for a gathering in which the members loudly chant in unision such formulae of Thikr uncorroborated by the Sunnah, while those who silently engage in Salaat and Thikr whether in jamaa't or individually in the Musjid in conformity with the Sunnah, are excluded from these benefits when in reality the musallis performing Salaat in the Musjid are the first and primary repositories of the glad tidings mentioned in the Hadith cited by the honourable Mufti Sahib.

At home the womenfolk perform their Salaat individually and in silence. They too constitute a gathering in the meaning of the Hadith, hence they too qualify as recipients for the wonderful benefits and rewards mentioned in the Hadith for those who engage in Thikr in a 'gathering'. A 'gathering' is a congregation of persons. The attribute of collectivism – to act in unision – and the attribute of loudness – all chanting loudly in chorus – are not requisites for the meaning of 'gathering' in the context of the Hadith. There is no explicit instruction in the Ahaadith ordering collectivism of the kind advocated by the venerable Mufti Sahib.

The other preposterous fallacy stated by the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib is his arbitrary averment: *"Silent zikr outwardly has no relation with a gathering."* The term 'outwardly' in this statement is a misfit. 'Silent' Thikr is done 'inwardly' – inside the heart and with a silent tongue, not outwardly. What is the basis for claiming that silent Thikr has no relation with a gathering? A Musjid packed with musallis silently engaged in Thikrullah is a gathering. There is no valid grounds in either the Hadith nor in language for claiming

that the hundred musallis sitting silently in the Musjid do not constitute a gathering.

In terms of the Hadith cited by the Mufti Sahib as well as other Ahaadith, this concourse of musallis sitting silently in the Musjid or performing their acts of ibaadat individually and silently come within the meaning of Rasulullah's statement, and they all qualify for the benefits mentioned in the Ahaadith. They all constitute the gathering which is enshrouded with mercy, and on whom the Malaaikah cast their sacred shade of blessings.

The conclusion: *"Hence this Hadith indicates towards audible zikr',* is highly erroneous. The very first beings who qualified for the awards and rewards mentioned in these Ahaadith in which appear the term 'gathering', are the Sahaabah. Despite the Sahaabah being the first recipients of these rewards, the honourable Mufti Sahib managed to only venture *"this Hadith indicates"*. He has not presented the *amal* of the Sahaabah. He has not cited a single episode of the Sahaabah having gathered to execute a programme of loud collective Thikr.

The clinching argument for dismissing the baseless opinion of the Mufti Sahib is his inability to present the practice of the Sahaabah to corroborate his inference, namely, *"this Hadith indicates towards audible Thikr"*. There is no need for 'indications' on such an important and vital issue as Masnoon Ibaadat. How did the Sahaabah perform their acts of Thikr in their 'gatherings'? Was loud and collective Thikr in chorus the practice of the Sahaabah? Were they not concerned with the tranquillity, peace, etc. which the Hadith promises for those who engage in Thikr in gatherings? Were the Sahaabah deprived of the benefits and blessings

mentioned in these Ahaadith wherein appears the aspect of 'Thikr in gatherings'? From the innumerable thousands of Ahaadith is it not possible to present a few explicit narrations which explain with clarity the *amal* of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah in their gatherings of Thikr? Why should we rely on the inferences of the venerable Mufti Sahib when we have the perfect and excellent Example of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallhu alayhi wasallam) and his Ashaab in front of us? Why have the Fuqaha elaborated with clarity the numerous acts of ibaadat, but do not make even the slightest mention of collective loud Thikr. Their silence is not puzzling. Collective loud Thikr simply did not constitute part of the ibaadat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the Sahaabah, the Taabieen and Tab-e-Taabieen.

This dispute cannot be decided in terms of an inference based on figments of personal opinion which has no relationship with the reality of the method in which the Sahaabah performed their Thikr. While the narrations mentioning the blessedness of gatherings of *Thaakireen* are general and unrestricted in meaning, that is, they apply to even two musallis or even one thaakir sitting in solitude in a cave, the honourable Mufti Sahib has innovated exclusivity for these Ahaadith. He has confined the benefits mentioned in these Ahaadith to those who gather for collective loud Thikr, chanting in chorus when in reality there is absolutely no substantiation in the Ahaadith for these new *specific forms* of Thikr even if they are assumed to have initially been *Mubah.*

The Mufti Sahib is expected to produce precise and unambiguous proof from the Ahaadith to corroborate the *specific forms of loud and collective Thikr* which is the subject of the discussion and dispute. How did the Sahaabah understand these Ahaadith and how did they give practical expression to Rasulullah's teaching regarding *Thikrullah?* Far from having organized collective loud Thikr programmes in the Musaajid, the Sahaabah acted fully in accord with the Qur'aanic instruction: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently."* There is no hint of collective loud Thikr gatherings in the Hadith. It is therefore highly erroneous to seek proof and justification in the Ahaadith for the current loud collective Thikr programmes.

The Sahaabah were the embodiments of the Ahaadith. Every command issued by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was given practical expression by the Sahaabah. Thus for the correct tafseer of the Ahaadith, it is imperative to view the Hadith narrations in the mirror of the Sahaabahs' *amal.*

It is highly improper to isolate the Ahaadith from the practical life and example of the Sahaabah. Minus the Sahaabah there is no Sunnah and no Shariah. They were the very first Link in the Chain of Islam. Highlighting the indispensability of the Sahaabah for recognizing and understanding the Sunnah, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) commanded the Ummah:

"Honour my Sahaabah, for verily they are the noblest among you then those who come after them (i.e. the Taabieen); then those who come after them (i.e. the Tab-e-Taabieen). Thereafter will appear falsehood."

(Mishkaat)

It is incorrect to relegate the practice of the Sahaabah into oblivion, then isolate the Ahaadith and mutilate it with a personal opinion which is unsubstantiated by the Sunnah. Thus, to say: *"This Hadith indicates towards audible zikr",* and *"This proves the permissibility of collective zikr", "Silent zikr has no relation with a gathering",* is untenable and is not borne out by the practical expression which the Sahaabah gave to these Ahaadith on which the venerable Mufti Sahib seeks to structure his case for loud, collective Thikr. Since it is known for a fact that the Sahaabah did not indulge in these *specific forms* of loud and congregational Thikr which are today in vogue and which are fast assuming the form of *Bid'ah,* the suggestion that these Ahaadith even 'indicate' towards these innovated forms of Thikr is preposterously erroneous.

The kutub of Hadith and Fiqah elaborately discuss the *Athkaar* of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah and the methods of recitation of these *Athkaar* on all occasions, including the Musjid. Nowhere will these *specific forms of collective loud Thikr* be found in these kutub. It is therefore futile, to put it mildly, to even attempt to acquire from the Ahaadith a basis for these new practices.

If these *specific forms* which are the subject of dispute, had any Sunnah validity or substantiation, there would have existed an unbroken chain of *Ta-aamul* (continuous, uninterrupted practice) extending to the Sahaabah. The kutub of the Muhadditheen and the Fuqaha would have explained its significance, virtues, benefits and methods of practical expression. We all would have been

practising collective Thikr in the Musaajid. However, there is nothing but complete silence, and even rejection.

The Hadith of Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu) cited by the Mufti Sahib has a very wide meaning. It is not restricted to a specific group of thaakireen sitting in the Musjid engaging in their own respective forms of Thikr silently. The 'group' which 'sits' and engages in Thikr is not a reference to a special group of persons who gather for any *specific form* of Thikr, be it Sunnat Thikr or Mubah Thikr. The tranquillity, mercy and peace descending for the thaakireen mentioned in this Hadith are for all types of thaakireen and apply to all situations. Thus, even one person sitting at home in Thikr, one woman engaging in Tasbeeh while doing her housework, a group of musallis performing Jamaa't Salaat in the Musjid, two musallis performing Jamaa't Salaat in the wilderness, a group of Muslims reciting the Qur'aan Shareef silently while scattered in the Musjid, a family reciting Qur'aan Shareef at home, the musallis performing Janaazah Salaat, the passengers making Thikr while in a vehicle or in the plane or ship, a worker keeping his tongue moist with Thikr while going about his duties, the sick person lying in his bed with Thikr on his tongue, the solitary person standing up during the night for Tahajjud, those who do not sit but move in Tawaaf of Baitullah – in short every person and every group of Muslims engaging in whatever type of ibaadat, be it wa'z, dars and tadrees, *all* of them without exception come fully within the ambit of this specific Hadith and similar other Ahaadith.

The Hadith may not be restricted to a sitting group of men or for a particular group who have gathered for a

Thikr program even if the program is devoid of any bid'ah. Such restriction is devoid of evidence. In the tafseer of this Hadith, the following appears in Mirkaat: *"Thus, his standing for taa-ah (obedience/ibaadat of Allah) such as Tawaaf, ziyaarat, Janaazah Salaat, seeking knowledge and listening to naseehat do not negate it (i.e. the purport stated in the Hadith)."* The Mufti Sahib's averment, *'Silent zikr outwardly has no relation with a gathering'*, is utterly fallacious. It excludes the numerous kinds of thaakireen from the barakaat mentioned in this particular Hadith.

With his highly erroneous inference, the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib has negated the scope of this Hadith for all the millions of Muslimeen engaging in their different acts of ibaadat either individually or in Jamaa't whether at home or in the Musjid or elsewhere. But there is no authority of the Shariah who has presented such a narrow opinion as the view of the Mufti Sahib. Furthermore, there is no backing anywhere in the Shariah for the inference that this Hadith pertains to a group of persons who have gathered for a *specific form of loud and collective Thikr.*

All Masnoon acts of ibaadat are explained with clarity in the reliable kutub of the Shariah. Regardless of inferences, indications and deductions, the venerable Mufti Sahib has no alternative other than conceding that the collective forms of loud Thikr are most assuredly not Masnoon, and that there is no substantiation in the Ahaadith for these *specific forms of loud collective Thikr.*

The Mufti Sahib will have to argue permissibility from another angle and base his case on Shar'i principles. If he manages to structure a case for a *Mubah* hukm, then it

will devolve on the other party to show grounds for the claim that this specific mubah practice has degenerated into *Bid'ah Sayyiah.* This is the narrow arena into which these *specific forms of collective and loud Thikr* programs fit.

(5) Loud Thikr Based on Deduction

The next Hadith quoted by the Mufti Sahib is similar to the aforementioned one narrated by Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu). Presenting his commentary, the venerable Mufti Sahib alleges: "*The importance and permissibility of the gatherings of zikr are highlighted in this Hadith. From this it can be deduced that loud zikr is permissible.*"

The 'importance and permissibility of gatherings of zikr' have not been contested. This statement in the context of our discussion is superfluous. Audible as opposed to 'loud' Thikr has also not been refuted. The Imaam recites audibly; the Talbiyah is audible; Takbeer-e-Tashreek is audible; the Athaan is audible; the Iqaamah is audible; lectures/bayaans are audible, individuals at home and elsewhere recite the Qur'aan Shareef audibly while others recite Tahleel and Tasbeeh audibly, alone and in privacy where they do not attract the gazes of people. These are Masnoon forms of Thikr which are audible. These audible Masnoon acts of Thikr have not been contested.

There is no need to deduct from any Hadith permissibility for audible Thikr. There is a difference between audible and loud Thikr which borders on screaming and shouting. The latter form of 'loud' Thikr is not permissible. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)

explicitly prohibited the screaming type of loud Thikr which has become a salient attribute of the participants of *halqah Thikr* which constrains the walls of echo.

The subject of the dispute as mentioned earlier is neither audible Thikr nor collective Thikr. Many forms of Masnoon Thikr have been referred to. Jamaa't Salaat is collective Thikr. The Dua after the Fardh Salaat is collective Thikr. The crowds making Tawaaf are engaged in collective Thikr. The musallis scattered all over the Musjid silently making their own Thikr are all in collective Thikr. Neither audible Thikr nor collective Thikr has been criticized. The bone of contention is that the *specific forms of collective loud Thikr* which are nowadays being practised in the Musaajid have degenerated into bid'ah, hence are not permissible. Insha'Allah, this aspect will be discussed in greater detail in the ensuing pages.

There is no substantiation in this Hadith for the type of collective and loud Thikr which is being given greater impetus by the day. All the Ahaadith cited by the Mufti Sahib pertain to all forms of *athkaar and ibaadat* – Masnoon acts and Mubah acts. It is incorrect to portray the Thikr mentioned in these Ahaadith as being acts of loud and collective Thikr which are executed in the customary forms in vogue. Besides the specific occasions of *jahr* (audible Thikr) ordered by the Shariah such as Athaan, Iqaamah, Talbiya, etc., there are no other forms of loud collective Thikr in the Sunnah. A new form of Thikr which has no substantiation in the Sunnah will have to be examined in the light of the principles of Fiqah to determine its status for issuing a ruling of *Mubah* or *Bid'ah.*

All the Ahaadith cited by the honourable Mufti Sahib refer to *Thikr* in general. There is no support for any bid'ah form of Thikr in the Ahaadith. 'Gatherings of Thikr' referred to in the Ahaadith pertain to all acts of ibaadat. It is improper to interpret these narrations to convey the impression that such 'gatherings' are the type of *halqah Thikr* programmes introduced recently in the Musaajid in South Africa.

(6) Silent Thikr

Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib, includes in his booklet a section which he captioned: *'Silent Zikr of the Heart and Tongue in the Light of the Ahaadeeth'***.** There appears to be no relationship between this caption and the objective of his booklet which is supposed to substantiate *loud collective Thikr in the Musaajid.* Since he has introduced this topic of silent Thikr, it will be appropriate to comment on the Ahaadith which he has presented to show the virtues of silent Thikr.

Among these Ahaadith are the following statements of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam):

* "Always keep your tongue moist with zikr of Allah Ta'ala'
* "The action most loved by Allah Ta'ala is that you meet your death in such a state that your tongue is moist with zikr of Allah Ta'ala."
* "There are two such sentences which are easy to recite yet they weigh heavy on the scales (of deeds) and they are loved by Rahman. They are Subhaanallahi wa bihamdihi and Subhaanallahil Azeem."
* "That.......... you ensure that your tongue always makes the zikr of Allah Ta'ala."

* "Recite Subhaanallah ten times, Alhamdulillah ten times and Allahu Akbar ten times a day but it will be counted as one thousand five hundred rewards on the scale of deeds."
* "Everything is a purifier and the purifier of the heart is zikr of Allah Ta'ala."
* "I am with My servant when he remembers Me and he moves his lips (when making My zikr)."

These Ahaadith cited by the Mufti Sahib, while explaining the significance and importance of *Mutlaq Thikr* (Thikr in general), do not refer exclusively to silent Thikr. All forms of Thikr come within the purview of these Ahaadith. In the narrations cited by the honourable Mufti Sahib, no mention of 'silent' Thikr is made. The superiority of silent Thikr is based on other Ahaadith and *dalaa-il* (proofs of the Shariah).

The Thikr exhorted in the aforegoing Ahaadith may be done silently or audibly, i.e. audible within the limits of the Shariah and unaccompanied by any adverse factor which would render the *Thikr form Bid'ah.* A man in solitude, whether sitting, walking or lying down, may engage in Thikr audibly without trumpeting, and his Thikr will be within the scope of the Ahaadith.

All the Ahaadith which the venerable Mufti Sahib has enumerated in substantiation of loud collective Thikr apply to silent as well as permissible forms of audible Thikr. And, all the Ahaadith enumerated for indicating the permissibility or importance of silent Thikr, also apply to permissible audible Thikr. Differentiating between these Ahaadith and presenting them under separate topics to substantiate different Thikr methods is

baseless, unwarranted and simply not vindicated by any *daleel* whether explicit or implied.

(7) The Ruling of Thikr

The honourable Mufti Sahib next explains the ruling on Thikr of the tongue and heart. There is no dispute on this issue. This exposition is unrelated to the subject of dispute, namely, the specific forms of loud collective Thikr innovated recently.

(8) The Benefits of Thikr

Then the honourable Mufti Sahib presents 13 pages in which he has enumerated the benefits of Thikr. In the context of the subject matter, this presentation is superfluous since it has no relevance to the dispute. No one denies the benefits of Thikr. The target of criticism is the *specific form of loud collective Thikr* which has degenerated into *Bid'ah.*

(9) "Loud and Collective Zikr of the Ambiyaa (Alayhimus salaam)"

The discussion appearing under this caption is a supine attempt to bolster the loud collective Thikr programmes in vogue nowadays. The Mufti Sahib cites the two following Qur'aanic verses in the endeavour to prove the validity of today's loud collective Thikr:

(i) "Verily We subjugated the mountains and the birds to gather with him (Hazrat Dawood – Alayhis salaam) and to glorify Allah Ta'ala in the evening and at daybreak. Each of them were occupied in His glorification."

"We placed the mountains and the birds at Dawood's (Alayhis salaam) service and together they engaged in Allah Ta'ala's glorification."

The mountains and the birds reciting the Tasbeeh of Allah and making Thikr with Nabi Dawood (alayhis salaam) is indeed a far cry from the *bid'ah* loud collective Thikr sessions organized in the Musaajid in our day. In this miraculous unison of Thikr there is no violation of any of the principles of the Shariah, neither the Shariah of Hadhrat Dawood (alayhis salaam) nor the Shariah of Muhammadur Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The discussion here concerns human beings engaging in loud and collective Thikr which is unsubstantiated in the Sunnah. The grounds on which the claim of bid'ah is made cannot be dispelled by the episode of the mountains and the birds joining Nabi Dawood (alayhis salaam) in Thikr. If the walls, pebbles, birds and mountains join any Buzrug in his Thikr, no one will object. No one will label such 'collective' Thikr as bid'ah. But, if human beings introduce a practice which conflicts with the teachings and methodology of the Sahaabah, then the claim of bid'ah will necessarily be made.

These Qur'aanic verses have no relevance to the dispute or the subject of our discussion. The Mufti Sahib would have been closer to the course of Haqq if he had rather taken into account the Qur'aanic verses which explicitly command humble and silent Thikr which clearly negates collective loud Thikr performed in public. Citing the mountains and the birds as a *'daleel'* is a ludicrous attempt.

Arguing his case, the Mufti Sahib states: *"There is a certain method of making zikr practiced by the Soofis in*

which whilst making zikr, it seems as if the entire universe is also engaged in Allah Ta'ala's zikr. This method of making zikr which is deduced from the above verse of the Glorious Qur'an has an unusual effect on the purification of a person's soul and on his enthusiasm in his worship."

Such far-fetched inferences and deduction are a futile attempt which do not constitute a basis for matters pertaining to the *Ahkaam* of the Shariah. This type of deduction is not proof of the Shariah. The Thikr methods of the Sahaabah should be presented in support of one's claim, not a method introduced by the Sufiya centuries after the Sahaabah. The benefits in such new methods are not valid grounds for *Bid'ah.* We are dealing with Shar'i Ahkaam for which evidence from the Sources of the Shariah are sought. The practices of the Sufiya, irrespective of their benefits, may not be adduced to confer Shar'i status to a peculiar method which has assumed the form of ibaadat when in reality it was unknown to the Sahaabah. The methods of the Sufiya will, Insha'Allah, be explained in the light of the Shariah. Here it suffices to say that their methods do not constitute Shar'i evidence for a practice which has been introduced as 'ibaadat' whilst in fact it was unknown to the Sahaabah.

The Mufti Sahib adds: *"From the above verses it becomes known that the zikr which Hazrat Dawood (Alaihis salaam) made with the birds and the mountains was loud and collective."*

If anyone has the lofty status of Nabi Dawood (alayhis salaam) and the mountains and birds join him in loud and

collective Thikr, no one will object. But, the Mu'jizah of Hadhrat Dawood (alayhis salaam) is not a *daleel* for a practice which we say has degenerated into bid'ah – for a practice which has no origin in the Sunnah. The ibaadat practices of the Sahaabah are the criterion, not the practice of the mountains and the birds. Furthermore, neither did Nabi Dawood (alayhis salaam) not the mountains and the birds perform to a public gallery of human beings. Hadhrat Dawood (alayhis salaam) was engaging in Thikr in the wilderness, far from the crowds while the Mufti Sahib is promoting Thikr programmes for the public gallery.

It would have served the case of the venerable Mufti Sahib better if it could have been proved that Hadhrat Dawood (alayhis salaam) had engaged with his followers in halqah Thikr in the Musjid. We say 'better' in relation to the 'collective' Thikr with the birds and mountains. Even if an act which was permissible in the Shariat of a previous Nabi is cited, it is not necessarily a *daleel* for an act which the Final Shariah of Allah Ta'ala disapproves of.

In the Shariah of Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam), making images and pictures of living beings was permissible. The jinn would manufacture such ornaments for Nabi Sulaimaan (alayhis salaam). Wine was permissible in the earlier Shariats. Making Sajdah for greeting was permissible. The actions and permissibilities of the previous Shariats are not a basis for permissibility in Islam if there is a conflict with the teachings or principles of our Shariah. There is therefore no *daleel* whatsoever in the mountains and birds joining Nabi Dawood (alayhis salaam) in his Thikr. Furthermore, the

Mu'jizah was not loud collective Thikr of human beings taking place in a Musjid.

It is the way of the Ahl-e-Bareilwi to fabricate proof for their bid'ah practices by making baseless deductions from Qur'aanic verses and unrelated Ahaadith. For example, to substantiate their sajdah for the graves of the Auliya, they will cite the sajdah which the parents and brothers of Yusuf (alayhis salaam) had made for him, or they will present the sajdah which the Malaaikah made for Hadhrat Aadam (alayhis salaam). In similar style, the honourable Mufti Sahib seeks proof for the loud collective Thikr custom in Qur'aanic verses and Ahaadith which bear no relevance to these bid'ah Thikr practices.

Proof for acts of ibaadat should be acquired from the specific practices of the Sahaabah and Taabieen, not by inferences and deduction from Qur'aanic Aayaat and Ahaadith which have general scope and unrelated meanings.

(ii) The Mufti Sahib mentions what he terms *"The Loud Zikr and Collective Zikr of Hazrat Yunus (Alaihis salaam)"* Presenting his *daleel* for loud and collective Thikr, the Mufti Sahib avers: *"Allah Ta'ala says in the Noble Qur'an: 'When the person of the fish (i.e. Hazrat Yunus – Alaihis salaam) left his nation in anger and thought that We would not straighten things for him, he called out to his Lord in the darkness: 'O my Sustainer, there is no deity but You. I am surely amongst the wrongdoers."*

The Mufti Sahib commenting on this verse, says: *"From this verse we come to know that when Hazrat Yunus (Alaihis salaam) called out to Allah Ta'ala, he did*

so in a loud voice. This was co-incidentally also a form of supplication. Note: The Arabic word Nidaa means to call out to someone in a loud voice. In Mu'jamul Waseet the word Nidaa is defined as: to call out to something or someone and to scream with a loud voice. In Qaamoosul Waheed the word Nidaa is defined as: to call out loudly to someone. According to Misbaahul Lughaat the word Nidaa means to call out. From these dictionary passages it becomes clear that the meaning of Nidaa is to call out with a raised voice."

Several aspects of this commentary requires rebuttal.

* Nowhere in the aayat does there appear even a hint of 'collective' Thikr. Yunus (alayhis salaam) was alone in the belly of the fish. He was in an abnormal situation. Even if he had called out loudly from within the belly of the fish, it does not constitute a basis for the collective loud Thikr conducted in the Musjid. While the Qur'aan unambiguously mentions the mountains and the birds making Thikr with Hadhrat Dawood (alayhis salaam), there is not the remotest suggestion in this aayat that the fishes or even just the one fish which had swallowed Hadhrat Yunus (alayhis salaam) had joined him in the Tasbeeh which he was reciting as a dua. And even if we assume that the fishes had joined him in Thikr, it is never a basis for the bid'ah type of collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid. The venerable Mufti Sahib's allegation that this aayat is *daleel* for the imagined 'collective zikr' of Hadhrat Yunus (alayhis salaam) is utterly fallacious.

Yunus (alayhis salaam) was alone in the stomach of the fish and he was alone making Thikr/dua. If it should be baselessly imagined that the fish which had swallowed

him or the fishes of the ocean had also joined him in Thikr, then too, such an imaginary figment will not be proof for a practice elevated to the status of ibaadat. Proof of ibaadat is the Qur'aan and the Sunnah – not such weird deductions and inferences, but explicit and specific references such as the narrations pertaining to the precise method of performing Salaat, making Dua, reciting Tasbeehaat, etc. Performance of Salaat and making Masnoon Dua in the way the Ummah is doing have not been structured on the basis of inferences and deductions from ambiguities.

* If Hadhrat Yunus (alayhis salaam) had made his dua/Thikr audibly in the darkness of the fish's body, it does not constitute a basis or proof for the loud collective Thikr practices in vogue in the Musaajid nowadays. It has not been averred that audible dua made by an individual in privacy is bid'ah or not permissible. We all recite the Qur'aan Majeed and make Thikr audibly in the privacy of our homes and in solitude, and individually. Such audible, as opposed to loud and screaming Thikr, is perfectly permissible. There is no dispute in this regard. If indeed the Thikr/dua of Hadhrat Yunus (alayhis salaam) inside the belly of the fish was audible, it would be justification for an individual making dua/Thikr audibly, alone in privacy, not in public to attract the gazes of people.

While it could be assumed that the Tasbeeh/Dua of Hadhrat Yunus (alayhis salaam) was audible, the implication stemming from the literal (dictionary) meaning, namely, 'screaming', is unacceptable and baseless. While the Thikr could have been audible, it

never was a scream nor a raised voice as the Mufti Sahib tried to suggest with the definition of Mu'jamul Waseet. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had specifically prohibited the Sahaabah on one occasion when they had raised their voices while calling on Allah Ta'ala.

* While the word, *'nidaa'* does generally mean audible and loud, *sirr/khafy (inaudible and silence)* are not excluded from its meaning, especially in the context of Dua. Describing the Dua of Hadhrat Zakariyya (alayhis salaam), the Qur'aan Majeed states:

"When he (Zakariyya – alayhis salaam) called (naadaa) his Rabb a ***silent call*** *(nidaa-an khafiyyan)."* In this aayat the word *'nidaa'* is qualified with the term *khafiyyan* (i.e. the *nidaa* was made silently and in solitude. Commenting on the word *nidaa* appearing in this aayat, Tafseerul Mazhari explains: *"Nidaa-an khafiyyan, i.e silently. in the middle of the night because, verily, silent Thikr and dua have greater ikhlaas (sincerity), and Ikhfaa' (silent dua) is the Sunnat (method) of Dua."*

Tafseer Ruhul Bayaan commenting on the terms *nidaa-an khafiyyan,* states: *"Zakariyya (alayhis salaam) observed beautiful etiquette in his Dua. Despite it (silent dua) being like audible dua in relation to Allah Ta'ala, it (silent dua – nidaa-an khafiyyan) is closest to Ikhlaas (sincerity) and furthest from riya (show). This Faqeer (i.e. the author of Ruhul Bayaan) says: Although the word 'nidaa' is in the meaning of (raising) the voice, nevertheless the voice is sometimes qualified with weakness, and it is then described as 'sautun khafiyyun' (silent voice), i.e. whispering. Similarly is nidaa'. It has*

been authentically reported from the Fuqaha that some low tones are regarded to be the minimum stage of jahr (audibility). By researching (this subject) another meaning has become apparent, namely, an-nidaaul khafi (i.e. a silent/hidden call) according to the elite (khawaas – the Auliya), such as Thikr-e-Khafi is hidden from even the guarding angels, leave alone people....”

Ma-aariful Qur'aan explaining *nidaa-an khafiyyan,* states: *“From this it is known that to make dua silently is afdhal (best/most meritorious). Hadhrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaas (radhiyallahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: ‘Verily, the best Thikr is silent (Thikr).”*

Elucidating further on the meaning of *nidaa,* Tafseer Ruhul Ma-aani states: *“Concealed from people. No one from among them heard him. Zakariyya (alayhis salaam) made his dua silently because it was more conducive for Ikhlaas (sincerity) and furthest from riya (show and ostentation).....On the basis of our explanation there is no conflict between* ***nidaa and it being silent****. In fact there is no conflict even when nidaa is defined with raising of the voice (raf'us saut).........And there is no conflict based on a figurative interpretation (of the term nidaa), or based on the view that* ***raf'us saut (raising the voice) is not a requisite for nidaa.”***

Thus, the *‘nidaa’* argument presented by the Mufti Sahib is devoid of substance in the context of the aayat as well as in the context of our discussion.

Commenting on *nidaa-an khafiyyan,* Tafseer Ibn Katheer states: *“Verily, Allah is aware of the pious heart, and He hears the silent voice (as-sautul khafi).”*

Al-Jaami li-Ahkaamil Qur'aan of Qurtubi explaining the terms, *nidaa-an khafiyyan'*, says: *"This is like Allah's statement: 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently, Verily, He does not love those who transgress the limits." – A'raaf. .... It has already been explained in Surah A'raaf that Ikhfa' (silence) is Mustahab in Dua. This aayat is Nass in this regard because Allah Subhaanahu praises Zakariyya for this (i.e. for his silent dua)."*

The word, *nidaa* is not restricted to calling aloud, screaming and shouting. Even a silent dua is referred to with the descriptive word, *nidaa'* as is clearly evidenced by the Qur'aan. It is, therefore, incorrect to infer on the basis of the term, *nidaa',* that Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) had 'screamed' and 'shouted' in the belly of the fish when he had recited the Tasbeeh. At most, audibility could be inferred, and the conclusion would be nothing beyond an inference stemming from the human mind. There is no *Nass* regarding the manner of Hadhrat Yunus's dua. Was it *jahri* or *khafi?* Every conclusion will be a human inference which cannot be presented as a basis for *istidlaal* (deduction of categorical ahkaam). The dua of Nabi Yunus (alayhis salaam) cannver constitute a basis for the collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid. But to establish the validity of audibility *(mutlaq jahr)* there is no need to undertake a journey into the deep ocean. Above the ocean, on land, there are copious Ahaadith for this purpose.

It emerges from *all* the Tafaaseer that the best and most praiseworthy and exhorted method of Thikr and dua is to make it silently. It is thus spiritually counter-productive and in conflict with the spirit of the Sunnah

and the Qur'aanic *nusoos* to promote *specific forms of loud collective Thikr* which have no origin in the Sunnah.

(iii) Then the venerable Mufti Sahib cites Hadhrat Ayyoob's (alayhis salaam) dua as proof for 'loud' Thikr. In his pain and grief from years of suffering, Hadhrat Ayyoob (alayhis salaam) lying alone in the wilderness, called to Allah Ta'ala, petitioning Him for mercy. Indeed, it strains credulity to imagine that this cry of Hadhrat Ayyoob (alayhis salaam) lying alone, forlorn and smitten by diseases could ever be proof for the current loud collective Thikr programmes conducted boisterously in the Musaajid in conflict with the Sunnah.

Furthermore, the dispute does not centre on the issue of audible Thikr. The dispute is loud collective Thikr which has degenerated into bid'ah. There is not a hint of support for the Mufti Sahib's case in the dua of Hadhrat Ayyoob (alayhis salaam).

(iv) The honourable Mufti Sahib then proceeds to present the example of Hadhrat Nabi Musaa (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) as proof for the loud collective Thikr programmes in vogue in the Musaajid nowadays. Citing the Qur'aanic aayat, he says: *"Allah Ta'ala in the Noble Qur'aan has quoted the words of Hazrat Musa (Alaihis Salaam): "So that we may glorify and remember You excessively." In Ma'aariful Qur'an this verse is explained as follows: The benefit of appointing Hazrat Haroon (Alaihis Salaam) as a minister and a partner in the prophethood of Hazrat Musa (Alaihis Salaam) was so that they could collectively remember Allah."*

There is no indication in this verse that Nabi Musaa (alayhis salaam) and Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) would sit in a halqah in the Musjid and engage in loud collective Thikr. The aayat does not exceed the assertion of making abundant Thikr. Hadhrat Musaa (alayhis salaam) only said: "So that we recite Your tasbeeh abundantly and that we remember You." Numerous persons can engage in Thikr in the same location without doing so collectively and loudly. If a number of people in the Musjid enage in silent Thikr individually, it will be correct to say: 'All the musallis are engaging in Thikrullah.'

Collective and loud Thikr is not a logical conclusion of the statement of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam). Even the Tafseer given by Mufti Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) in Ma-aariful Qur'aan does not explicitly state that the Tasbeeh/Thikr of these two Nabis was done collectively and loudly. The emphasis in the explanation of Ma-aariful Qur'aan is on the *mahoul* (environment). A pious *mahoul* greatly facilitates acts of piety. Thus, Mufti Shafi (rahmatullah alayh) explains: *"In Thikr and tasbeeh, a pious environment and pious companions play a great role. A person whose companions are not pious (men of Allah) cannot perform as much ibaadat as one whose environment is pious and whose companion is a thaakir, shaaghil. Hence, a person who desires to be engrossed in Thikrullaah should also search for a pious environment."*

The plural expression of Hadhrat Musa (alayhis salaam) does not convey the idea of any specific congregational form of loud Thikr. The statement only signifies that both will be engaging in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala at all times and in all conditions. The reference is to Thikr in general. At times when Hadhrat

Musa (alayhis salaam) was not in physical proximity with Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam), his statement still held true. Both were occupied in Allah's Thikr at all times, whether it was Jamaa't Salaat, individual Salaat, making Thikr while on a journey, whether they were in company or alone or in any other state, together or separated, they were in a state of remembering Allah Ta'ala. This is the meaning of Hadhrat Musa's statement: *"So that we recite Your tasbeeh in abundance...."* There is no support whatsoever in this statement for the loud collective Thikr programmes conducted in the Musaajid.

(10) Qur'aan and Hadith Proofs for loud Thikr

(a) The honourable Mufti Sahib cites the following Qur'aanic aayat in support of loud collective Thikr in the Musaajid: *"Allah Ta'ala says in the Noble Qur'an: 'When you have completed your Haj rituals then remember Allah Ta'ala as you would remember your forefathers, or even more intense than that.' Commentary: From this verse it is clear that the zikr of Allah Ta'ala should be made audibly because during the Days of Ignorance, the people on the basis of pride remembered their forefathers openly. They did not do so secretly nor silently in their hearts."*

The Mufti Sahib's commentary is highly ambiguous and misleading. He presents the practice of the mushrikeen as a basis for collective loud Thikr. According to the Mufti Sahib's logic, collective loud Thikr is permissible because during the days of Hajj, the mushrikeen would vociferously and loudly proclaim the virtues and glories of their ancestors. This is the Mufti

Sahib's basis. It would have saved him from self-inflicted academic immolation if he had rather laboured more arduously to hack out a basis from some practices of the Sahaabah. But, to present the stupid *amal* of the mushrikeen as a basis for the imagined validity of collective loud Thikr, is to fall from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Precisely which Thikr 'should be made audibly' during the days subsequent to the completion of the Hajj rituals? After execution of the *Manaasik* of Hajj, there is no *specific form* of Thikr commanded by the Shariah to be observed during the stay at Mina. It is a period of Thikr, albeit squandered in futility and shaitaaniyat by the hujjaaj in these times. Although these are holy days which should be devoted to abundant and intense Thikr, there is no formal, mandatory or specific form of audible or silent Thikr ordained for this occasion. The solitary audible Thikr during the Hajj ibaadat, namely the Talbiyah, has also ended with the striking of the first pebble at the Jamrah. There remains now no mandatory act of audible Thikr. There is no Masnoon audible Thikr ordered during these days. The Mufti Sahib's claim is therefore baseless.

His opinion that Thikr during these days 'should be audible' is bereft of Shar'i substance. His opinion in fact is tantamount to promoting an accretion which comes within the purview of bid'ah because nowhere does the Shariah order that the Thikr during this period 'should be audible'. The imposition of incumbency is the right of only Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Only an act of ibaadat substantiated by the Sunnah or observed by the Sahaabah will be considered to be Masnoon. No one has

the right to impose on others his personal understanding and interpretation, giving it the status of ibaadat or wujoob. By saying that the Thikr during these days *'should be audible'*, the venerable Mufti Sahib has overstepped the bounds of the Shariah, hence the Qur'aanic stricture: *"These are the limits of Allah. Do not transgress them",* is applicable here.

The deduction of the incumbency of Thikr on the basis of the loud practice of the mushrikeen of Jahiliyya during these days, is utterly scandalous. The honourable Mufti Sahib has concluded that Thikr after completing the Hajj rituals 'should be audible' because this audibility was the style of the mushrikeen during the days of Jaahiliyyah. Since the polytheists would raise their voices with their bunkum praises of their ancestors, we too are now required to raise our voices with the remembrance of Allah Azza Wa Jal in terms of the Mufti Sahib's logic.

This logic is absurd and has no basis in the Shariah. The essential factor debunking the Mufti Sahib's opinion is that the Shariah has not imposed any mandatory form of Thikr during these days, whether audible or silent. It is a period of abundant Thikr and ibaadat, and it has to be maintained free of the accretions of bid'ah.

The Qur'aanic reference to the custom of the pre-Islam pagans of Makkah is by way of castigation. It has not been mentioned by the Qur'aan Majeed as a style for emulation by Muslims. It is bizarre to argue that since the mushrikeen loudly and vociferously sung the praises of their ancestors, Muslims too are required to loudly sing the praises of Allah Ta'ala. The Mufassireen have explicitly stated that the effect of the Aayat's command is

'to engage in abundant Thikr', not loud Thikr. Stating this fact, it appears in *Tafseerul Mazhari:*

"Allah's statement: 'And remember Allah like you remember your fathers or a remembrance of greater intensity', is not a comparison with jahr, but (the comparison) is in making Thikr in abundance (ikkthaar)."

(b) Among his imagined Qur'aanic proofs for the *specific forms* of loud collective Thikr conducted in the Musaajid, is his averment: *"Allah Ta'ala says: "And who can be more oppressive than him who prevents the name of Allah Ta'ala from being mentioned in the Houses of Allah Ta'ala."*

The citation of this verse is a veiled calumny and slander which the votaries of these *specific forms* of loud collective Thikr programmes in public usually direct to those who label these programmes as bid'ah. This attitude is part of the legacy inherited by these votaries from the Qabar Puja group. When the Ulama-e-Haqq of Deoband labelled the customary meelaad functions as bid'ah, the Bareilwi bid'atis vilified the Ulama and accused them of disrespecting Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). When the Ulama explained the mas'alah of *Imkaan-e-Kithb*, the grave-worshippers accused them of alleging that Allah Ta'ala speaks lies – Nauthubillah. In similar vein, those from among the Deoband School who have of recent opened the avenue of bid'ah with their *specific forms* of unsubstantiated loud collective Thikr enacted for public display, accuse the Ulama-e-Haqq of preventing from Thikrullah and prohibiting Thikrullaah. Well, let it be known to them that just as our Akaabireen had taken

up cudgels with the Bareilwi bid'atis, we are now following in their footsteps, hence we are constrained to take up cudgels with the Deobandi bid'atis. Be they from any school of thought, the initiators and perpetrators will be called to account. All bid'atis, of whatever hue and persuasion, are of the same breed of deviation.

The presentation of the aforementioned aayat as 'proof' for the loud collective Thikr programmes demotes the contender from the lofty rank of *Ilm.* We are certain that the venerable Mufti Sahib is not in the darkness nor in any doubt regarding the dispute. We are convinced that he does understand the target of our criticism. He is aware that we are criticizing the *specific loud collective Thikr programmes being conducted in the Musjid.* We are certain that in his heart he knows that we are not saying that Thikrullaah is haraam. Despite this awareness, the honourable Mufti Sahib has succumbed to emotion, hence he has proffered an argument which is tantamount to slander.

Preventing bid'ah in the Musjid is like Hadhrat Ali's prevention of a person from performing Salaat before the Eid Salaat. It is also like Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's prevention of the enactment of bid'ah in the Musjid. The aayat quoted by the Mufti Sahib has absolutely no relevance to the prevention of bid'ah and baatil.

(c) Another flabby proof presented by the Mufti Sahib in his endeavour to validate the loud collective Thikr accretion, is his baseless inference eked from the Qur'aanic aayat:

"Allah Ta'ala says in the Noble Qur'an: 'And remember your Lord fearfully and silently in your heart; do not remember Him too loudly."

Firstly, the translation, *"do not remember Him too loudly"*, is incorrect. The correct translation of the terms '*doonal jahr'* is 'less than loudness'. There is a difference between 'too loudly' and 'less than loudness'. The aayat negates loudness, whereas the Mufti Sahib's translation negates excessive loudness. The aayat instructs that the recitation should be less than *jahr*, i.e. not loud. The meaning is clear: the recitation may be a whisper or above a whisper, but not loud as the Mufti Sahib's translation implies. Less than 'excessive loudness' and 'less than loudness' have different meanings.

Secondly this aayat in fact refutes the loud collective Thikr in the Musaajid. At these Thikr performances, the participants indulge in excessive *jahr (jahr-e-mufrit)* bordering on screaming. *'Doonal Jahr* (less than *jahr)* is not an attribute of the public Thikr performances.

The explicit instruction in this aayat to make Thikr *"in your heart with humility and fear"* confirms the superiority of silent Thikr as opposed to the advocacy of loud Thikr which the Mufti Sahib seeks to extrapolate from this very aayat which negates *jahr*. Whereas the aayat negates *jahr*, public performance and show, the honourable Mufti Sahib attempts to utilize it (the aayat) for an opposite objective, namely, the promotion of *jahr*, and public performance which generally is accompanied by *riya, ujub and takabbur.*

The logic of the Mufti Sahib baffles the mind. The aayat emphasizes silence, concealment, humility and fear

in Thikr. But the Mufti Sahib extravagated an interpretation entirely out of the character of the meaning of this verse for the sake of vindicating the unsubstantiated *specific* form of loud collective Thikr which is incrementally becoming prevalent in the Musaajid.

Thirdly, this aayat addresses an individual. The individual is commanded in the methodology of Thikr. There is not the remotest hint in this aayat for collective public Thikr programmes which are in diametric conflict with the silence, secrecy, concealment, humility and fear commanded in this gracious aayat.

Although according to Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) this particular aayat only refers to Qiraa't in Salaat, the Mufassireen in general explain that the verse refers to *Mutlaq Thikr* (Thikr in general). The *specific program of loud collective Thikr* has to be necessarily excluded from the universality of *Mutlaq Thikr* in view of the following factors:

- It (the loud collective Thikr) is beyond the confines of *'nafsika'* (silent Thikr in the heart).
- It does not come within the scope of *'Doonal Jahr bil Qaul'*.
- It is generally bereft of *'tadharru'* (humility) and *'kheefah'* (heartfelt fear).
- It is an act of self-expression *(Izhaar)* whereas the individual's silent Thikr in solitude is an act of concealment *(Ikhfa')*. The attribute of *khafy* (concealment which goes with silence) is the conspicuous theme of the aayat.

Ma-aariful Qur'aan presenting the tafseer of this aayat, says: "In these two verses (i.e. 205 and 206 of Surah Al-A'raaf), according to the *Jamhoor* (the overwhelming majority of the Mufassireen) is the rule pertaining to *Mutlaq Thikrullah* and its *aadaab* (etiquettes, respects), which includes tilaawat of the Qur'aan. According to Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) these verses refer to only the Qur'aan and the *aadaab* mentioned here relate to tilaawat of the Qur'aan. However, this is not really a difference because, besides the Qur'aan, these very same *aadaab* apply to other *athkaar* (forms of Thikr) according to all authorities. In short, in this aayat is the explanation of the rule for man's Thikr of Allah, its times and etiquettes."

This tafseer has further severely dented the 'proof' which the venerable Mufti Sahib has attempted to extrapolate from the aayat. In terms of the version of Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) this aayat is restricted to only Qur'an tilaawat. Hence, from this viewpoint, the loud collective public and unsubstantiated Thikr programmes simply do not feature.

Commenting on *'Doonal Jahr bil Qaul',* Tafseer Qurtubi states: "Dua with the tongue for Allah in silence without *jahr. ....Ibn Zaid narrated: "There should not be jahr with it." Mujaahid said: "They are commanded to make Thikr in their hearts with humility and fear." Ibn Juraij said (in the tafseer of this aayat): "Raf'us saut (raising the voice), nidaa'(loud calling) and siyaah (screaming) with dua are Makrooh (i.e. Makrooh Tahrimi)."*

Explaining *'Doonal Jahr bil qaul',* Tafseerul Mazhari states: "A speech above *sirr* (total silence) and less than *Jahr* (loudness)."

The net result of this tafseer is that the Thikr may be a whisper, if the thaakir does not opt for the option of total silence. Less than *jahr* is a whisper or above a whisper, but never the loudness which echoes and shakes the walls of the Musjid.

The audible Thikr which is less than *jahr* mentioned in this aayat refers to *Mutlaq Thikr*. It is not a support for the type of loud collective Thikr being conducted with considerable ostentation in public places.

(d) The honourable Mufti Sahib poses the question: *"Thus when the Qur'an – one of the forms of zikr – can be recited loudly, why can other forms of zikr such as reciting the kalima, etc. not be recited aloud when both are regarded as zikr?"*

This is indeed a perculiar question. It implies that the Mufti Sahib has failed to understand what the dispute is all about. It was not contended by anyone that besides the Qur'aan Majeed, other forms of Thikr may not be recited audibly. The criticism is directed specifically to the *specific forms of loud collective Thikr* which has become customary in the Musaajid nowadays. No one claims that Thikr may not be made audibly. The Mufti Sahib has indulged in exercises of futility in a laborious attempt to prove the permissibility of audible Thikr. The presentation of the many Ahaadith to support audible Thikr is superfluous.

We also engage in audible Tilaawat and audible Thikr. We follow the Chishti Silsilah in which *Thikr Bil Jahr* is

the norm while the Naqshabandi Silsilah proscribes audible Thikr. We are, Alhamdulillah, cognizant of the Thikr methodology of our Chishti Akaabireen. The target of our criticism is not *Thikr bil Jahr*. Our concern is with the bid'ah into which the loud collective Thikr has developed in this day.

The Thikr of the Qur'aan

In the aforementioned question mentioned in (d) above, posed by the Mufti Sahib, he has placed tilaawat of the Qur'aan Majeed (which is also a form of Thikr) in the same category as other forms of Thikr, hence he made the query, seeking to know the difference. Well, there is a difference between Tilaawat and other forms of Thikr. This difference is the basis for audibility *(jahr, but not mufrit jahr)* being better for purposes of Tilaawat, while silence *(sirr)* is superior for other forms of Thikr.

Answering the query of the venerable Mufti Sahib, Tafseerul Mazhari presents the following dissertation:

"If it is asked (as the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib has asked): '*Jahr* with Thikr and dua is bid'ah, and the Sunnah in both (Thikr and dua) is *ikhfa'* (silence) as the mas'alah has been explained in the tafseer of Allah Ta'ala's statement: *'Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence.',* then what is the difference between Thikr and qiraa't of the Qur'aan despite qiraa't also being Thikr?' (In response) We (the Author of Tafseer Mazhari) say: The Qur'aan consists of admonition, stories imparting lessons and laws. Its theme miraculously absorbs ailing hearts, and inclines them towards Islam. It is for this reason that Allah Ta'ala says: *"(O Muhammad!) If any among the mushrikeen seeks*

refuge by you, then grant him refuge until such time that he has heard the Kalaam of Allah…’. Further, its recitation with the tongue is an additional ibaadat over and above Thikr, and it is such an ibaadat which wards of indolence (ghaflat) from the heart. Also, causing others to hear it is another ibaadat which is desireable to Ar-Rahmaan. On the contrary, the objective of Thikr (other than the Tilaawat) and dua is acceptance (of the dua) and (with Thikr) it is to forget things which divert one from Allah, Al-Azeez, Al-Mannaan, so that the act of Thikr and even the thaakir disappear from his sight, and there remains in his vision only Al-Waahidul Qahhaar (The One Mighty Allah).”

It is rather strange that the august Mufti Sahib has failed to differentiate between the Thikr of Tilaawat and other forms of *Athkaar.* Firstly, the Qur’aan-e-Kareem itself advocates reasonable *jahr* (audibility) for Tilaawat. According to Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu), the aayat of Surah A’raaf in which appears the phrase, *doonal jahr bil qaul* (less than loud), was revealed specifically for the method of reciting the Qur’aan Shareef.

Secondly, Allah Ta’ala commands in the Qur’aan: *“When the Qur’aan is being recited, then maintain silence.”* Thus, *Ismaa’* (to recite audibly to enable others to hear) and *Insaat* (maintenance of silence by the listeners) are two special acts of Ibaadat commanded by the Qur’aan. *Ismaa’* are acts related to Tilaawat, not to other forms of *athkaar.* While intentionally reciting the Qur’aan for the hearing of others is ibaadat provided there is no riya, this *Ismaa’* (causing others to hear) is *not* advocated with other forms of Thikr.

Thirdly, the Qur'aan comprises of a variety of topics which require *tadabbur* and *tafakkur* (reflection and contemplation). The need for this is to reflect on the actual words. This in itself is another act of ibaadat. The variety of subject matter such as warnings, admonition, glad tidings, description of Jannat and Jahannum, episodes of bygone times and nations, punishments which eliminated communities from the face of the earth, etc., etc., focus the mind on matters other than only the *Zaat and Sifaat* of Allah Azza Wa Jal. While Tilaawat is not direct communion with Allah Ta'ala despite its composition of various forms of ibaadat and Thikr, other forms of pure Thikr and Dua are direct communion with Allah, Al-Khaaliq, Ar-Rahmaan, Ar-Raheem.

The *Muhib* (Lover) who engages in plain Thikr or dua speaks directly with his *Mahboob* (Beloved). He is in privacy with his *Mahboob*. The private and secret conversation between Lovers may not be advertised and publicized. It is indeed hypocritical for a lover to tell all and sundry about his moments of secrecy in communion with his Beloved. Thus, the difference between the two forms of Thikr (Qiraa't and Nidaa/Dua) should be manifest for one who has *adna munaasabat (minimum compatibility)* with his *Mahboob-e-Haqeeqi* (True Beloved) – Allah, Al-Kareem, Al-Wadood, Ar-Ra-oof, Maalikul Mulk Zul Jalaai Wal Ikraam.

So while reasonable *jahr* for Tilaawat of the Qur'aan is preferable, *ikhfa'* is superior and best for Thikr and dua, and according to some authorities, *ikhfa'* in dua and Thikr is mandatory. From the aforegoing explanation it should be clear that there is a difference in the two forms of Thikr –Qir'aa't and other forms of Thikr and dua.

Excessive Thikr

(e) In another insipid attempt to condone the loud collective Thikr practices in public places, the Mufti Sahib says: *"It is narrated on the authority of Hazrat Abu Jazaa'i (Radhiyallahu anhu) that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi wa sallam) said: 'Remember Allah Ta'ala excessively to such an extent that people call you a hypocrite who is only doing good deeds for show."*

Commenting on this narration, the Mufti Sahib avers: "A person will be only called insane when he excessively makes zikr of Allah Ta'ala aloud, not when he makes zikr silently."

This spurious comment ignores the thrust and emphasis of the Qur'aan and Sunnah on silent, concealed Thikr. The Mufti Sahib using this Hadith as a basis, seeks to elevate loud zikr above silent Thikr which the Qur'aan and Sunnah promote and elevate, and on which there exists *Ijma'* (Consensus) of the Ummah. It is wrong, irrational and the effect of emotionalism to present scores of narrations – almost all ambiguous and unrelated to loud Thikr – in an endeavour to highlight the imagined greater importance of loud Thikr, thereby implying its superiority over silent Thikr which all authorities unanimously say is superior and the best method. The Mufti Sahib's foundational pillar in his system of reasoning is 'inference'. He has no explcit *dalaa-il* to substantiate his collective loud Thikr public performances. His personal inferences are not evidence and basis for structuring Shar'i *ahkaam.*

The Mufti Sahib has been constrained to adopt this line of reasoning in defence of the loud collective Thikr programs which he espouses zealously for want of *Nusoos* (explicit Qur'aanic and Sunnah evidence). A man of knowledge is not supposed to unduly emphasise a permissibility which is of secondary importance in order to

substantiate a practice which has no origin in the Sunnah, and which is developing into a bid'ah.

It is also incorrect that excessive Thikr is related to only loud Thikr, and that the Hadith refers to only loud Thikr. The Hadith mentions abundant Thikr, not loud Thikr. 'Loud' is the Mufti Sahib's personal inference. A man engrossed in abundant silent Thikr can also be branded as 'insane' by ignoramuses. Wherever he is seen, his lips are perpetually moving with Thikr. He may be sitting silently in the Musjid for hours or he may be wandering in the wilderness or the bush with his lips constantly moving with Thikr. As an effect of his engrossment in Thikrullah, he becomes oblivious of his surroundings. Such a person sometimes renounces the world and adopts solitude. He may be branded as 'insane' by the people of the world. In fact, great Auliya such as Hadhrat Uwais Qarni (rahmatullah alayh) and many others, were branded insane for their abundance of Thikr of Allah Ta'ala and the Aaakhirat. Yet, never were these 'insane' Auliya ever seen or heard wandering the streets vociferously proclaiming their Thikr of Allah Ta'ala.

In fact those who were labelled 'insane' on account of their Thikr, were not men who wandered around the street screaming Thikr. They were men who were totally absorbed in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala, primarily *Thikr-e-Qalbi* (Thikr with the heart). One great Buzrug had to be led by a mureed from his house to the nearby Jumuah Musjid for forty years because he himself could not find the way to the Musjid. This was the effect of his total absorption in Thikrullaah. Such men whose primary occupation was Thikr-e-Khafi and Thikr-e-Qalbi were regarded 'mad' by the denizens of the world. This 'mad' Buzrug did not run around the streets screaming Thikr. Their state of Thikr which was interpreted as 'insanity' by the people of the

world, was *Thikr-e-Khafi*. The pervading effect of the Thikr on their entire being – spiritual and physical – led spiritually blind people to label these thaakireen insane. There is no basis for the assumption that this effect is restricted to loud Thikr. A Shar'i *hukm* cannot be structured on the basis of the Mufti Sahib's personal opinion which has no standing in the Shariah.

The title of insanity which people of the dunya award to a thaakir has absolutely no relationship with the loud collective Thikr programs which are in conflict with the Sunnah and which are generally creative of riya and ujub.

The Talbiyah

(f) The Mufti Sahib's attempt to gain support for the loud collective Thikr programmes by referring to the audible recitation of the Talbiyah during Hajj time, and the occasional recitation of a poem by some Sahaabah, is incredulous. The programs being conducted in the Musaajid are specific forms of innovated Thikr being promoted to the level of incumbent ibaadat. The Talbiyah is a Waajib act of ibaadat. But on the basis of the Talibiyah being recited audibly it may not be concluded that qiraa't in Nafl Salaat during the daytime could also be recited aloud. Nor is it valid to cite Talbiyah and poems as a basis for an attempt to recite Dua-e-Qunoot aloud in Witr Salaat or to recite Durood Shareef aloud when Rasulullah's name is mentioned in the Khutbah.

Talbiyah and poems may not be cited as a basis for fabricating a specific form of Thikr which has no basis in the Sunnah. The Talbiyah has a basis in the Sunnah, and so have all the other Shar'i acts of audible Thikr. According to the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, the audible forms of ahthkaar such as Talbiya, Athaan, etc., are exceptions which are excluded from the Principle of *Ikhfa'* which applies to Thikr

and dua. A collectivism commanded by the Shariah, is ibaadat while a fabricated collectivism given the veneer of ibaadat is bid'ah. There is a stark difference between the two, which the honourable Mufti Sahib has failed to understand hence the irrational exercise to prove every Thikr Hadith to be a reference to loud Thikr when in fact the teaching of the Qur'aan and Sunnah is *Thikr-e-Khafi* besides the couple of exceptions such as the Talbiyah, Athaan, Iqaamah, etc.

Since the cases of loud Thikr commanded by the Shariah are exceptions to the general principle, *'The principle in athkaar is Ikhfa'*, these may not be extended to all forms of Thikr. Such misdirected application culminates in the abrogation of the the very Principle emphatically stated by Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh). Exceptions should not be regarded as the principle. The primary principle is the basis of formulating a hukm. Not the exception.

Takbeer

(g) The attempt to prove validity for the loud collective Thikr programmes by extrapolating a basis from the Hadith which mentions the loud Takbeer Battle Cry during Jihad is laughable to say the least. In fact it is lamentable. The Battle Cry being loud has no relevance to Thikr which has to be made in concealment and with silence. The loud Takbeer cry on the battlefield is a glaring exception and cannot be presented to justify an unsubstantiated loud collective Thikr programme which is being projected as 'Sunnah' ibaadat. The aim of the loud – excessively loud – Takbeer battle-cry is to drive fear and awe into the hearts of the enemy, hence the command of *'Have mercy on your souls'*, and *'less than jahr'* which apply to Thikr in general, does not apply to the battle-cry.

War is an abnormal situation. Therefore, the abnormal act of *jahr-e-mufrit* is legitimized. An exception is not a principle on which to formulate a *hukm*. The Mufti Sahib with his logic has ignored the *Asal* and has grasped the exception. Instead of applying the principle, *'The asal in athkaar is ikhfa' and jahr is bid'ah'*, the Mufti Sahib inverts the process and makes the exception the principle.

‘THE VIEWS OF THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM’

The honourable Mufti Sahib has cited copiously from the statements of Scholars of Islam. These Scholars were undoubtedly accepted Ulama and Fuqaha. The only achievement of the Mufti Sahib in this regard was to build a case for permissibility of audible Thikr which in any case has never been challenged by us. We reiterate our acceptance of the permissibility of audible Thikr.

However, permissible audible Thikr or any other *Mubah* act will leave the bounds of permissibility if accompanied by excesses, for then it will enter the domain of *Bid’ah*. This applies to acts which are presented in the form of ibaadat which is not substantiated in the Sunnah. It was unknown to the Sahaabah and the Taabieen, hence the excesses render such a practice *Bid’ah.*

The Mufti Saheb has cited the Scholars selectively in order to produce a distinct slant in favour of the imagined superiority of loud Thikr. In view of the biased attitude of the venerable Mufti Sahib it will be best to present an elaborate exposition of the views of the Fuqaha and Mufassireen on this topic for the benefit of readers.

TAFSEER MAZHARI

“Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently Verily, Allah does not love those who transgress the limits.”
(Al-A’raaf, aayat 55)

Khufyatan: i.e. silently, for verily, *ikhfa’* is proof of sincerity, and is the furthest from riya (ostentation).

Know that Thikr in general is ibaadat even if it is *jahran* (audible) when it is devoid of riya, or whether it is *sirran.* Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that Allah Ta'ala says: 'I am according to the opinion My slave has of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I too remember him in My Heart. If he remembers Me in a gathering, then I remember him in a better gathering.'

This Hadith gives the benefit of both Thikr jahr and Thikr khafi. Some people have opined that this Hadith indicates the superiority of *Thikr jahri* over *Thikr khafi*. However this (opinion) is devoid of substance because there is no excellence (or superiority) of Allah remembering His servant in a gathering over His remembering him in His Heart. In fact, the reality is the opposite (namely, this Hadith indicates the superiority of Thikr Khafi). The *zauq* (spiritual understanding) of this statement will be appreciated by one who has tasted from the Cup of Divine Love.

Allah's statement: *"And remember Allah like your remembrance of your fathers or a remembrance of greater intensity"*, is not a comparison with *jahr*, but (the comparison) is in making Thikr in abundance *(ikthaar).*

There is *Ijma' (Consensus)* of the Ulama that verily, Thikr *sirran* (silently) is *afdhal* (superior, more meritorious), and *jahr* with Thikr is *Bid'ah* except in special cases when *jahr* is necessary, e.g. Athaan, Iqaamah, Takbeeraat Tashreeq, Takbeeraat Intiqaal in Salaat for the Imaam, Tasbeeh for the Muqtadi (to correct the Imaam's error), Talbiyah in Hajj, etc………..

The *Asal* (the actual principle) in *athkaar* is *Ikhfa'* while *jahr* with it is *bid'ah.* Thus when there is a conflict in *jahr,* then the lesser one will be preferred. The statement of Hasan, indicates silent Thikr is *afdhal,* and on it is the *Ijma'* of the Sahaabah and of those who followed them (the Taabieen). His statement is, *'Verily between a silent dua and a public dua there are seventy ranks'.* (i.e. silent Thikr is seventy times superior than audible Thikr).

Further, the Muslims (i.e. the Sahaabah) would strive with fervour in their dua, and no sound would be heard from them. If there (occasionally was a sound) it would be a whisper between them and their Rabb.. And that is because Allah Ta'ala says: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently."* Also Allah Ta'ala mentioned a pious slave and was pleased with his (Nabi Zakariyya's) action, hence Allah says (in the Qur'aan): *'When he (Zakariyya) called unto his Rabb a silent call.'* The Hadith of Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas (radhiyallahu anhu) also affirms the superiority of Thikr Khafi. He narrated that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"The best Thikr is Thikr-e-Khafi."

Narrated by Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh, and Baihaqi in Shu'bul Imaan.

And, also the Hadith of Abu Musa who narrated: "When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) went on the expedition of Khaibar, the people (the Sahaabah) ascended in a valley. Then they raised their voices with Takbeer. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'Have mercy on your souls. Verily you are not calling a deaf being nor an absent being. Verily, you are calling

One Who hears and Who is near." Narrated by Al-Baghawi.

I (i.e. the author of Mazhari) say that although this Hadith indicates the superiority of Thikr Khafi, the statement, *"Have mercy on your souls',* indicates that the prohibition of *jahr* and the command of *Ikhfa'* are based on *shafqat* (affection). It is not for total impermissibility of *jahr.* Similarly, is the implication of the Hadith: *"The best Thikr is Thikr khafi."*

Indeed the author of Mazhari has presented a balanced view. While he maintains the permissibility of reasonable jahr, he confirms the superiority of Thikr-e-Khafi.

The permanent and normal Thikr and dua practice of the Sahaabah has been explained in this tafseer as well as in almost all other kutub of Tafaaseer. The silent whispering method was the norm. The narrations which mention certain Sahaabah engaging in loud Thikr, are isolated examples. It was not the practice of the generality of the Sahaabah. While isolated examples indicate permissibility of Thikr-e-jahr, these cases cannot be presented as a basis for the claim that loud Thikr is the norm and has greater merit than *Thikr-e-Khafi.*

The stages of Thikr

Continuing the exposition of the methodology of Thikr, Mazhari states:

"Know that verily, Thikr has three stages:

Jahr

(1) *Jahr* – raising the voice with it (Thikr). This is Makrooh (Makrooh Tahrimi – reprehensible and forbidden) by *Ijma'* (i.e. the Consensus of the Sahaabah and Taabieen), except when there is valid cause and

hikmah dictates it. At such a juncture, *jahr* will be superior to *ikhfa',* e.g. Athaan, Talbiyah, etc. Perhaps the Chishtiyyah Sufiya had adopted *jahr* for the *Mubtadi* (the mureed who has just been initiated – the beginner in the path of moral reformation) because of the dictate of *hikmah,* and that *hikmah* is to ward off shaitaan, to banish *ghaflat* (obliviousness), and *nisyaan* (forgetfulness), and kindling the flame of divine love by means of *riyaadhat* (spiritual exercise). Notwithstanding this *(hikmah)*, the condition (for permissibility of *jahr*) is abstention from ostentation and aggrandizement.

Thikr bil Lisaan Sirran

(2) *Thikr bil lisaan sirran* – silent verbal Thikr. This is the objective of Rasulullah's statement: *"Your tongue should forever be moist with Thikrullaah."* Narrated by Tirmizi and Ibn Maajah. Tirmizi and Ahmad. Narrated: "It was said (i.e. to Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam): Which deed is the most superior?" Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) replied: "That you depart from this world with your tongue moist with Thikrullaah."

Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Verily, the Malaaikah wander around the roads searching for the people of Thikr. When they find a community engaging in Thikrullaah, they proclaim: 'Come towards your need!' Then they cover them with their wings until the sky. Then their (the angels') Rabb asks them whilst He is more aware of them (of the thaakireen): "What are My servants saying?" The Malaaikah say: 'They recite Your tasbeeh, Your takbeer, Your praise and Your holiness.

Then Allah says: "Have they seen Me?" The Malaaikah say: "No, By Allah! They have not seen You." Then Allah says: "What will be their reaction if they should see Me?" The Malaaikah say: "If they should see You, their worshipping, their glorifying and praising You will intensify and increase." Then Allah says: "What are they asking?" The Malaaikah say: "They are asking You for Jannat." Allah says: "Did they see Jannat?" The Malaaikah say: "Wallah! O our Rabb! They have not seen it." Allah says: "How will it be if they had to see Jannat?" The Malaaikah say: "If they had to see Jannat, their desire for it would intensify; their quest for it would intensify and their enthusiasm for it would become greater." Then Allah says: "From what are they seeking refuge?" The Malaaikah say: "They seek refuge from the Fire." Allah says: "Have they seen the Fire?" The Malaaikah say: "Wallah! O our Rabb! They did not see it." Allah says: "How will be their reaction if they had to see the Fire?" The Malaaikah say: "If they had to see it, their flight from it would intensify and their fear for it would become greater. Then Allah says: "Be you witness that verily, I have forgiven them." Then one of the angels says: "A certain person is not one of them. He merely joined them for some need." Allah says: They (all) are compatriots. Their companion will not be deprived." Narrated by Bukhaari and Muslim similarly."

Noteworthy is it that Mazhari recorded this lengthy Hadith in his exposition of the second category of Thikr, namely, Silent Verbal Thikr."

Thikr bil Qalb

(3) *Thikr bil Qalb war-Rooh wan-Nafs* – Thikr with the heart, soul and nafs – and with such spiritual faculties in which the tongue has no role. This is such *Thikr Khafi* which even the Guarding Angels are unable to detect. Abu Ya'la narrated from Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) that she said: "Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'The silent Thikr which the Guarding Angels are unable to hear is seventy times superior. On the Day of Qiyaamah, when creation will be assembled for their reckoning and the Guarding Angels will present whatever they had preserved and written, Allah will say to them: 'See, if anything else remains for him (the person whose deeds are being checked).' They (the Angels) will say: 'We have not left out anything of which we were aware and which we had preserved, but we have enumerated it and recorded it.' Allah Ta'ala will then say: 'Verily he has a good deed of which you are not aware. I shall inform you of it. It is *Thikr-e-Khafi*.' "

I (i.e. the author of Mazhari) say: "This Thikr is such a Thikr which has no termination and there is no defect in it." *End of Mazhari's exposition.*

The enumeration of the stages of Thikr by Mazhari is significant. First is *Jahri Thikr* which in general is Makrooh. Second is *Sirri Lisaani Thikr (silent verbal Thikr)* which is highly meritorious, and which is unanimously superior to permissible audible Thikr (Thikr devoid of excessive loudness). The third stage is the highest. It is such silent Thikr deep in the innermost recesses of the heart – Thikr of which even the Guarding Angels are unaware. It should now be clear that the greater the degree of *Ikhfa', the greater the merit of the*

Thikr. The attempt by the honourable Mufti Sahib to portray superiority for loud, collective Thikr enacted as a public performance is thus deplorable. Even the endeavour to prove that permitted audible Thikr is superior to silent Thikr, is lamentable.

MA'AARIFUL QUR'AAN

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) presents the same exposition which Tafseerul Mazhari elucidates on the aayat: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently."* However, Ma'aariful Qur'aan presented the same discussion in the tafseer of another aayat, namely, *"Remember your Rabb in your heart with humility and with fear and with a voice less than jahr...."*

Expanding further on this subject, Ma'aariful Qur'aan explains in the tafseer of the aayat: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently..."* as follows:

"In these two words, two important etiquettes of Dua and Thikr are mentioned. The first is that for acceptance of dua it is necessary that man expresses in front of Allah his humility, weakness and contemptibility. The words of his dua should be in conformity with humility and weakness. His verbal expression too should be humble, and his countenance when making dua should also be the same.

The second is that even if someone understands the meanings of the words he is supplicating with, but his countenance and verbal expression are devoid of humility, then such a dua is simply a demand. No one has the right to make demands.

In the first word (i.e. *tadharru-an –with humility)* the rooh (soul) of dua has been shown. In the second word

(*khufyatan – silently)* the teaching is that to make dua in concealment and silently is *afdhal (superior)* and more conducive for acceptance. Firstly, when making dua in a loud voice, it is difficult to maintain humility and weakness. Secondly, in loud dua there is the probability of riya (show and ostentation). Thirdly, its form (i.e. the form of loud dua) implies that this person (the one who makes dua) is unaware that Allah Ta'ala hears and knows when in fact Allah is equally aware of our *zaahir* and *baatin.* Every speech, be it audible or silent, is known to Him. It was for this reason that on the occasion of the expedition of Khaibar when the Sahaabah raised their voice with Thikr, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "You are not calling on a deaf or absent Being. You are calling a Being Who hears and Who is near." It is therefore, futile to raise the voice.

Allah Ta'ala, Himself, mentioned the dua of a pious man (i.e. Nabi Zakariyya) with the words: *"When he called His Rabb with a silent call."*, namely, that dua be made with a voice which is subdued and silent. From this it is understood that Allah Ta'ala loves this method, namely, that dua be made with a subdued voice and silently.

Hadhrat Hasan Basri (rahmatullah alayh) said that silent dua is 70 times superior to dua made loudly and publicly. It was the practice of the Salf-e-Saaliheen to make great effort in dua and Thikr. Most of the time they were engrossed in dua and Thikr. But no one could hear their voice. In fact, their dua remained between them and their Rabb. Many among them had memorized the whole Qur'aan and while they constantly recited it, others would not be aware. Many among them had acquired vast

knowledge of the Deen, but they would not advertise this. Many of them spent the nights in their houses performing lengthy Namaaz, but people would not be aware. He (Hadhrat Hasan) said: "They would never perform in public such ibaadat which they could conceal. Their voices were extremely subdued. (Ibn Kathir and Mazhari)."

Ibn Juraij said that it is Makrooh to raise the voice and make a noise when making dua. Imaam Abu Bakr Jassaas Hanafi says in Ahkaamul Qur'aan that according to this aayat it is *afdhal* to make dua silently instead of *izhaar* (i.e. expressing the dua audibly). The same is narrated from Hadhrat Hasan Basri and Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhuma).

May Allah Ta'ala guide the Imaams of the Musaajid of our age. They have completely abandoned this instruction of the Qur'aan, Sunnah and the way of the Salf-e-Saaliheen. After every Namaaz there is an artificial performance. Some words are recited loudly in conflict with the *aadaab of dua.* Besides this, they disturb those musallis who are Masbooq. The domination of custom has hidden the evils and corruption of this practice.

If there is sometimes a special occasion and a congregational dua in which one person audibly makes the dua while the others say, *'Aameen',* then this is not objectionable. However, the condition (for this permissibility) is that this should not be a disturbance to others who are engaged in Salaat and ibaadat. Also, this practice (of making congregational dua) should not become customary so that the masses do not gain the impression that this is in fact the method of making dua. This is generally the attitude nowadays.

While this explanation has been in regard to making dua for needs, if the meaning here is taken to be Thikr and ibaadat, then too, according to the Ulama-e-Salf *Thikr-e-Sirr* is better than *Thikr-e-jahr*.

With regard to the Mashaaikh-e-Chisht among the noble Sufiya who instruct the *Mubtadi* (beginner in the path of Tasawwuf) with *Thikr-e-jahr*, it is by way of ***Ilaaj (spiritual remedy)***, taking into consideration his condition so that indolence and obliviousness would dissipate with the *jahr,* and an affinity with Thikrullah develops in the heart. In reality, even according to them (the Chishti Mashaaikh) *jahr* in Thikr is not desireable *(matloob)* despite it being permissible. Furthermore, its permissibility in terms of the Hadith is conditional with the absence of *riya.*

Imaam Ahmad, Ibn Hibbaan, Baihqi and others narrated from Hadhrat Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas (radhiyallahu anhu) that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"The best Thikr is Thikr Khafi and the best rizq is what suffices (for needs)."

Yes, at particular times and special occasions, *jahr* is desireable and *afdhal.* Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has clarified these times and occasions with his command and practice, for example, reciting the Athaan and Iqaamah with raised voice, reciting qiraa't audibly in the *Jahri* Salaat; raising the voice with Takbeeraat-e-Intiqaal, Takbeeraat-e-Tashreeq and Talbiyah during Hajj, etc. Thus, the Fuqaha (rahmatullah alayhim) have in this regard issued the verdict there should be *jahr* at the particular times and occasions which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had instructed

either by way of statement or practice. Besides these special occasions (instructed by Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam), *Thikr Khafi* is *aula* (better and more preferable) and *anfa'* (more beneficial)." *End of Ma-aariful Qur'aan's exposition.*

The salient aspects in the aforementioned Tafseer presented by Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) are:
* Thikr-e-Khafi is superior to reasonable Thikr-e-Jahr. On this there exists *Ijma'* of the Sahaabah, Taabi-een and Salf-e-Saaliheen.

* The occasions when Thikr-e-Jahr is better, and in fact, mandatory, have been specified by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), himself. Thus, no one has the right to introduce a special form of loud collective Thikr practice in the Musaajid. Such an innovation, when it becomes entrenched, will embed in the minds of the masses that this practice is the Sunnah.

* The customary *jahri* dua practices in vogue in numerous Musaajid are not permissible. Thikr has been included in this category by Hadhrat Mufti Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh).

Noteworthy is Hadhrat Mufti Shafi's criticism of the customary method of *jahri* dua after the daily Fardh Salaat despite the fact that there is a basis in the Sunnah for Dua after Fardh Salaat. To a far greater degree will the criticism apply to loud collective Thikr which has no basis in the Sunnah.

* The *jahri Thikr* which the Mashaaikh of the Chishti Silsilah prescribe are meant for the *Mubtadi (the novice who has just been initiated)*, and the objective of such Thikr is to serve as a spiritual remedy. It has not been introduced as a substitute for Masnoon acts of ibaadat.

It now does not behove the devotee of Allah, who is in the quest of the Truth to deliberately don the blinkers of emotion to impair his judgment and to cloud his spiritual vision which if unfettered, will guide him into the felicity of Truth.

An interesting observation in Tafseer Roohul Ma'aani is the statement: *"You will see numerous from the people of your age screaming in dua, specially in the Jawaami' (public Musjids where the masses at large attend). So much so that there prevails much noise and the ears are deafened. However, they do not know that they have combined two bid'ahs – raising the voice in dua and doing that in the Musjid."*

The honourable Mufti Sahib will most assuredly argue that in the loud collective Thikr programmes presently in vogue, screaming is not practised. All acts of bid'ah had generally commenced with good intentions and at a slow pace. The vile accretions were a gradual process.

Bid'ah is engineered by Shaitaan himself. The practice is initiated 'beautifully'. It incrementally progresses into hardcore bid'ah. At that juncture it is elevated to the status of Wujoob. So, the venerable Mufti Sahib may be rest assured that the current loud collective Thikr programmes if not halted, will follow the path which the Bareilwi bid'ah has gone.

TAFSEER IBN KATHEER

Tafseer Ibn Kathir presents the same exegis which appears in Tafseer Mazhari and Ma-aariful Qur'aan. There is therefore no need to repeat it here.

TAFSEER KABEER

Presenting the tafseer of the aayat: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence. Verily, Allah does not love those who transgress the limits.",* Imaam Raazi (rahmatullah alayh) explains:

"Know, that verily *ikhfa'* is reliable in dua. Several facts indicate this.

(1) This very verse indicates that Allah Ta'ala commanded dua together with ikhfa'. The apparent meaning is Wujoob (i.e. ikhfa' is Waajib). If not Wujoob, then it will not be less than Mandoob (Mustahab).

Then Allah Ta'ala says: *"Verily, He does not love those who transgress the limits."*

The apparent meaning is that He does not love those who transgress in abandoning these two aforementioned acts, namely, *tadharru' (humility)* and *ikhfa' (silence and concealment).* The meaning of Allah's love is 'thawaab' (i.e. awarding thawaab). In other words, the meaning of the aayat is: Allah will not reward the person who abandons humility and silence in dua, and He does not prefer (such dua). One who is like this (i.e. abstains from tadharru' and ikhfa') is most certainly among those who deserve punishment. It is thus obvious that Allah's statement is a severe warning for abandoning tadharru' and ikhfa' in dua.

(2) The second proof is that Allah Ta'ala praised Hadhrat Zakariyya (alayhis salaam). Thus Allah Ta'ala says: *"When he called his Rabb a call which was silent (and concealed)",* i.e. he concealed it from people and sincerely offered it to Allah.

(3) The third proof is the narration of Abu Musa Ash'ari (radhiyallahu anhu). They (the Sahaabah) while on an expedition climbed in a valley and began raising their voices with Takbeer and Tahleel. Then Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Have mercy on your souls. You are not calling a Being who is deaf nor absent. Verily, you are calling a Being Who hears and Who is near and Who is with you."

(4) The fourth proof is Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) statement: *"Dua in silence is equal to seventy duas in public."* He (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) also said: *"The best Thikr is Khafi (silent), and the best rizq is what suffices."* It is narrated from Hasan that a man (i.e. Sahaabi) would memorize the Qur'aan while his neighbour would not know of it. A man would acquire vast knowledge, and the people would not be aware thereof. He would perform lengthy Salaat during the night while the guests living with him would be unaware. Verily we found many people who were extreme in concealing their good deeds. The Muslims (i.e. the Sahaabah) would make dua with great fervour and their voices could not be heard except for a whisper because Allah Ta'ala says: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently."*

(5) The fifth proof is a rational one. The nafs excessively inclines to show, ostentation and aggrandizement. When man raises his voice with dua, then riya merges with that dua. Thus there remains absolutely no benefit in it. Therefore *ikhfa* with dua is best to ensure that the dua is saved from riya.

There are some issues in this regard in which the people of Tareeqat (Tasawwuf) have differences. The issue is: Is *ikhfa* in ibaadat better or *izhaar* (making public) of ibaadat? Some say that it is better to conceal it to ensure that it is saved from riya. Some others say that it is better to reveal it so that others are encouraged to follow in performing these acts of ibaadat. Shaikh Muhammad Bin Isaa Al-Hakeem adopted the moderate view, namely, if one fears of falling prey to riya, then *ikhfa* is best so as to save one's good deeds from being nullified. If one has attained moral purity and such a degree of yaqeen that one feels safe from every vestige of riya, then *izhaar* is better so that the benefit of *iqtida'* is achieved." (*Iqtida here means that others seeing the ibaadat will emulate it.*).

All the kutub of Tafseer present similar explanation and highlight the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi (Silent Thikr).* Audible Thikr, besides the occasions commanded by the Shariah, is the exception, and is not advocated except in the circles of some Sufiya who have devised their audible Thikr programmes for serving as spiritual remedies. The objective of the Sufiya was never to present such Thikr methods as substituites for the Sunnah acts of Thikr and Dua.

Thikr Gatherings in the Musaajid

The Mufti Sahib claims: *"The Ulama have unanimously agreed that it is preferable to host gatherings of zikr in the Masaajid as well as out of the Masaajid..."*

Here the Mufti Sahib, in addition to referring to loud Thikr, implies organizing of group-form Thikr. On the contrary, the Fuqaha have unanimously agreed on the *afdhaliyyat* (superiority and preferability) of silent Thikr. And, how is it possible for them to have 'agreed unanimously' that loud Thikr in congregational form is superior in the face of the explicit and abundant *Nusoos* to the contrary? The facts of the Shariah rebut this spurious claim profferred by the venerable Mufti Sahib. These irrefutable facts are:

(a) The Aayaat of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem.
(b) The Ahaadith of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).
(c) The practice of the Sahaabah.
(d) The practice of the Taabi-een and the Salf-e-Saaliheen in general.

Any statement of anyone, be he a Faqeeh or Sufi or Wali, which conflicts with the *Nusoos* and the Sunnah shall be set aside and suitably interpreted to reconcile it with the mainstream *Ijma'*. The need for interpretation and reconciliation regarding such stray, odd and isolated views develops when the view is attributed to an Aalim of the Haqq who has genuinely slipped by the presentation of an untenable view.

The Qur'aanic aayaat refuting the claim of the superiority of loud Thikr, and of it being 'unanimously'

superior and preferable, have already been mentioned during the course of this discourse. To refreshen the memory, they are reiterated here:

* Allah Ta'ala praising Nabi Zakariyya's silent and concealed dua, says:
"(Remember) when he (Zakariyya) called His Rabb a call which was silent." (Surah Maryam, Aayat 3)

* Allah Ta'ala issuing a command, says:
"Call (make dua) your Rabb with humility and in silence (and concealment). Verily, Allah does not love those who exceed the limits." (Surah A'raaf, Aayat 55)

* Allah Ta'ala commands:
"And remember (make Thikr of) your Rabb in your heart with humility, in concealment and in a voice less than jahr...." (Surah A'raaf, Aayat 205)

* Allah Ta'ala mentioning thhe attitude of the Mushrikeen when they are overwhelmed by danger, states: *"They call Him with humility and in silence."*
(Surah An'aam, Aayat 63)

Describing the plight of the unbelievers when they are engulfed with danger, the Qur'aan Majeed says: *"Say: Who saves you from the (dangers of) the darkness of the land and ocean? You (in times of danger) call on Him with humility and in silence (tadharruan, khufyatan)."*

The sincerity of the mushrikeen in times of overwhelming danger, is illustrated in these two terms, (*tadharr-an, khufyatan*). When caught up in a raging storm in the oceans or when the aircraft is about to crash

or some grave danger overtakes them, they forget their idols and false gods. They cry sincerely, with humility and in silence, pleading to Allah Ta'ala for safety. At times of overwhelming danger and fear, they forget their phantom deities and call unto Allah Ta'ala with sincerity and silently.

From this aayat too it is established that the necessary attributes of sincerity of Thikr and Dua are silence and concealment. In the aayaat too, these two terms depict the Dua and Thikr which are most beloved to Allah Ta'ala. Hence He praises Nabi Zakariyya's dua which was accompanied by these two attributes.

Then we have the Sunnah – the teachings and practices of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah, and perpetuated by the Salf-e-Saliheen – giving practical expression to the command and spirit of the Qur'aan Majeed, Thus, it is seen that as a norm and permanent practice, the Thikr and Dua of the Sahaabah and Taabieen were silent.

On the other hand, there are isolated incidents of some Sahaabah having engaged in audible Thikr. But this was not the standing practice. Isolated practices should not be selected and given preference when these are in conflict with the teaching and spirit of the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

The honourable Mufti Sahib has resorted to this improper tactic of selecting isolated examples and some miniscule views to build a case for loud collective public Thikr entirely oblivious of what actually the Qur'aan commands and what exactly was the normal practice of the Sahaabah and Taabieen on this issue. Instead of maintaining course and 'proving' the validity, permissibility and superiority of the *specific forms* of

loud collective Thikr performances being customarily conducted nowadays in the Musaajid, the venerable Mufti Sahib has been deflected from this subject by lack of Shar'i evidence. Thus, the presentation of argument in defence of audible Thikr is a diversionary stratagem for side-tracking the actual topic of dispute, namely, the contention that the customary loud Thikr performances are bid'ah. The topic of contention is not audible Thikr *per se.*

The venerable Mufti Sahib has cited Bazzaziyyah and Shaami to prove superiority for loud Thikr. As far as Bazzaziyyah goes, Shaami comments as follows: *"I say the discussion of the author of Bazzaaziyyah in this regard (i.e. loud Thikr) is confused. Sometimes he says that it is haraam, and sometimes permissible."* Shaami further comments: *"Some people of knowledge say that jahr is better."* He cites several benfits of *Thikr jahri.*

Thus, in Bazzaaziyyah the ruling vaults between haraam and jaaiz (permissible). The *idhtiraab* (confusion) referred to by Shaami is understandable. According to 'some' men of knowledge, says Shaami, audible Thikr is *afdhal* on account of the several spiritual benefits which he has enumerated, and to which we have referred earlier on. This *afdhaliyyat* view of *some* men of knowledge is the effect of the rationale which underlies this type of Thikr. This is what the Mashaaikh-e-Chisht aver. The audible Thikr being better is when it is prescribed as a spiritual remedy, not as an independent Masnoon act of ibaadat.

Furthermore, the view of *some* men of knowledge cannot to cited in refutation or in detraction of the explicit Qur'aanic and Hadith Nusoos which confirm the

superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi* beyond any shadow of doubt. In addition the *amal* of the Sahaabah and the Salf-e-Saaliheen is a practical illustration of the *Nusoos*. Their *amal* also rebuts the contention of *some* men of knowledge, especially if the meaning is *afdhaliyyat* in general, i.e. audible Thikr is the original Masnoon norm, while *Thikr-e-Khafi* is secondary and inferior to loud Thikr. This is baseless. The view of '**some** men of knowledge' is indeed a very far cry from the claim of consensus on the superiority of loud Thikr.

Shaami mentioning the proof of the *some* men of knowledge, cites the Hadith: *"If he (the thaakir) remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a better gathering."* Refuting this 'proof', Tafseer Mazhari says: *"Some people (i.e. the some men of knowledge mentioned by Shaami) have thought that this Hadith indicates superiority of Thikr-e-jahr over Thikr-e-Khafi. However, this is devoid of substance because there is no excellence of Allah remembering His servant in a gathering over Allah remembering him in His Nafs. In fact, the reality is the opposite. And, the spiritual appeal of this explanation is perceived by those who have tasted from the Cup of Divine Love."*

The view of audible Thikr being better than silent Thikr is based on the far-fetched interpretation of *some* men of knowledge. But this view has to be necessarily set aside or reconciled in view of its conflict with the *Nusoos* explicitly declaring the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi,* and also because of its conflict with the *amal* of the Sahaabah and the Salf-e-Saaliheen.

In fact, Shaami mentions that the *afdhaliyyat* view of *some* men of knowledge is conditional. It is not

unrestricted. It is not the original rule and norm which is *Thikr-e-Khafi* commanded by the Qur'aan Majeed. Hence, Shaami says: *"If (the Thikr) is devoid of these (evils such as riya, etc.) which have been mentioned, then some people of knowledge say that jahr is afdhal."*

The attachment of this condition further weakens the case of *afdhaliyyat* for Thikr-e-jahr. While *Thikr-e-jahr* has regulating factors which render it haraam, there are no such adverse factors encumbring *Thikr-e-khafi.*

The honourable Mufti Sahib, in defence of the customary loud collective Thikr displays in the Musaajid, states: *"The Ulama have unanimously agreed that it is preferable to host gatherings of zikr in the Muasaajid as well as out of the Masaajid, except in the case when making loud zikr would disturb a person who is sleeping, or performing Salaah or reciting the Holy Qur'an."*

This claim appears in Shaami as well as in other kutub. Rejecting this notion, Tafseer Mazhari says: *"The original practice in Athkaar is Ikhfa' while jahr is bid'ah. Hence, when there is a conflict in jahr, then the lessor category will be preferred."* The 'lesser category' in this regard is the *Istihbaab* (being Mustahab, preferability) of *Thikr-e-Khafi.* What this means is that if certain Ahaadith indicate *Thikr-e-jahr* while other narrations point to the superiority of *Thikr-e-khafi,* then the way of reconciliation is to conclude the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi* in the *Istihbaab* category. But *never* will *Thikr-e-jahr* be superior to *Thikr-e-khafi.*

The alleged consensus on the superiority of *Thikr jahr* stated in Shaami is erroneous. There exists no such *Ijma'.* How could there be consensus on this issue, when:

- The Qur'aan Majeed emphasises the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi.*
- The practice of the Sahaabah and Taabieen was *Thikr-e-Khafi.*
- Imaam Abu Hanifah states that *Thikr jahr* is bid'ah.
- Some other Fuqaha say that it is haraam.
- Some Ulama say it is Makrooh.
- All Four Imaams say that *Thikr-e-Khafi* is Mustahab.

Now in view of this formidable array of Shar'i evidence, the claim of consensus of the superiority of loud Thikr is baseless regardless of the source of its emanation, be it Shaami. In fact, Shaami's claim of 'some men of knowledge', effectively contradicts and dismisses the consensus claim.

Tafseer Mazhari continuing the explanation, states: *"The Hadith of Hasan (and he also cites some other Ahadith) indicates the afdhaliyyat of the Thaakir of Sirr as well as the unanimity of the Sahaabah and those who followed them (the Taabieen) on this (i.e. on the superiority of Thikr-e-Khafi)."* The venerable Mufti Sahib claims 'unanimity of the Ulama' on the preferability of loud Thikr while Tafseer Mazhari proclaims the *Ijma'* of the Sahaabah and Taabieen on the *afdhaliyyat of Thikr-e-Khafi.* The view of our inclination is clear.

It is conceded that audible Thikr, provided there are no adverse factors accompanying it, is permissible. But, the claim that it is *afdhal* is fallacious. It is fallacious even if the audible Thikr is made with sincerity. In *Kifaayatul Mufti*, Hadhrat Maulana Kifayatullah (rahmatullah alayh)

states: *"In circumstances where Thikr jahr is not established by the Shariah, if there are no adverse factors then the ruling is that it is permissible. If there is an accompanying adverse factor, then it (the audible Thikr) will not be permissible. Examples of such adverse factors are the jahr of the thaakir disturbs a sleeping person, or it disturbs a musalli performing Salaat, or the thaakir considers jahr to be necessary or incumbent, etc. Where these factors do not exist, Thikr-e-jali (audible Thikr) is permissible, but Thikr-e-Khafi is Aula (preferable, better and of greater merit)."* And why should it not be so, when this type of Thikr was the permanent and original practice of the Salf-e-Saaliheen – a practice commanded by the Qur'aan and Sunnah?

For loud Thikr there is no command and no exhortation in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The permissibility is deducted from specific narrations and episodes which were not the norm of the Sahaabah. On the contrary, the *Nusoos* of the Qur'aan and Sunnah in favour of the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi* are abundant and conspicuous, unambiguous and explicit. Thikr-e-Khafi for its superiority is not reliant on inference, interpretation and deduction. The commands for its observation are explicit and emphatic.

In another place in *Kifaayatul Mufti,* the ruling is reiterated as follows: *"When there are no other musallis in the Musjid, then it is permissible to recite loudly the Kalimah or the Qur'aan Majeed. But it is afdhal (then too) to recite silently."*

Imaam Sarakhsi states in his *Al-Mabsoot: "Ikhfa' in Dua is preferable. Allah Ta'ala says:* 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence'."

The following appears in *Imdaadul Ahkaam,* Vol. 1, Page 316:

Question: In the dua after the five daily Fardh Salaat, the Imaam recites the dua, *Allahumma antas salaam,* audibly *(bil-jahr),* and the Muqtadis also say *bil-jahr, 'Sami'na wa ata'na....'* Is there anything wrong in perpetuating this method?

Answer: It is bid'at. All should say it silently. Constancy in reciting it audibly is also bid'at. Its *daleel* is what Allaamah Abdul Hayy states in his Fataawa narrating from Mudkhal: *"All of them should abstain from jahr with Thikr and dua after completing the Salaat if they are in Jama'at, for verily, that is bid'ah. According to Nisaabul Ihtisaab it is Makrooh for them to recite Takbeer audibly after Salaat. It is bid'ah except during the Days of Nahr and Tashreeq........The method in the aforementioned question is in conflict with the tareeqah of the Nabi and the tareeqah of the Salf-e-Saaliheen."*

Ibn Bittaal said: *"The authorities of the Math-habs and others are unanimous that raising the voice with takbeer and Thikr is not Mustahab. Ubaidah said that it is bid'ah." In Fathul Baari is mentioned: "It is preferable for the Imaam and Muqtadis to make Thikr silently except if there is the need for ta'leem."*

In Kabeeri it is mentioned: "According to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) it is bid'ah to raise the voice with Thikr because it is in conflict with the command in Allah's statement: *'Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence.'* "

Mullah Ali Qaari states in *Mirkaat:* "Some of our Ulama have explicitly said that raising voices in the Musjid even with Thikr is haraam."

In Sharh Muslim, Imaam Nawawi (rahmatullah alayh) said: Without difference of opinion, dua shall be made silently."

Imaam Siraajuddin Al-Hanafi said: "Ikhfa' in dua is Mustahab." Hadhrat Shaikh Abdul Haq (rahmatullah alayh) is quoted in the *Haashiyah of Mishkaat*: "In it (i.e. Shar'i practices such as Athaan), *jahr* is established in terms of Shar'i daleel. However, in acts which are not established in the Shariah, *Khafi* (silent Thikr) is best."

The votaries of *Thikr bil jahr* are entirely bereft of any *Qat'i* (Absolute in certitide) and *Sareeh* (explicit) proof.

It should be well understood that when a permissible act or even a Mustahab act is elevated above its status and by virtue of permanency the idea of its incumbency becomes entrenched in the minds of the masses, then such an act degenerates into bid'ah. It will be incumbent to abstain from it. Allaamah Khalil Ahmad Ambethwi (rahmatullah alayh) states in his *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah: "A mubah act, in fact even a Mandoob act, because of 'iltizaam' (rigid and perpetual observance) and the belief of its emphasis becomes bid'ah, hence not permissible. Therefore, even the Ta-aamul (practice) of the Mutqaddimeen is not hujjat (proof) in this regard."*

The *Usool* of the Shariah will be invoked and fatwa issued even if there appears to be a conflict with the practice of the Mutaqaddimeen.

The honourable Mufti Sahib adopts a queer method of reasoning in his bid to confer superiority to loud Thikr. For example, he cites Mufti Kifaayatullah (rahmatullah alayh) on the permissibility of audible Thikr. Firstly the permissibility of audible Thikr, provided it is devoid of

haraam factors, is not contested. Although there appears at the end of Mufti Kifayatullah's fatwa, the categorical statement (which the venerable Mufti Sahib did in fact mention): *"However, silent Thikr is better."* The (the Mufti Sahib) irrationally persists with the claim that audible Thikr is better.

THE AUDIBLE THIKR PRACTICES IN THE KHANQAS

The honourable Mufti Sahib in his attempt to justify the new bid'ah which has recently developed in the Musaajid in this country, meanders into the khanqah practices of our Akaabireen. There is no need for us to even discuss the Thikr programmes of the khaanqas. The Mashaaikh themselves aver that such programmes are spiritual remedies. We have not contested the khaanqah programmes. Revert to the explanation of Hadhrat Mufti Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) which appears above, in *Ma-aariful Qur'aan,* in the tafseer he provides on *Thikr-e-Khafi.*

It should, however, be observed that what happens in the khaanqas and the khaanqah Musjids is not *Shar'i Daleel.* The evidence of the Shariah comprises of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The khaanqah practices do not constitute a basis for acts of innovation which are being accorded preference in violation of the Qur'aanic and Sunnah Nusoos. The Thikr programmes of the khaanqas are private activities which were not promoted to the pedestal of Masnoon ibaadat by the Mashaaikh. Earlier, we have mentioned the explanation of Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi (rahmatullah alayh) and the exposition of Tafseer Mazhari.

Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi

Hakimul Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh), explaining the khaanqah Thikr, says: "But, *jahr* is not the actual objective *(maqsood bith-thaat)* nor is it by itself an act of thawaab. To subscribe to such

a belief is bid'at. I believe that the Hadith: *"Verily, you are not calling a deaf being nor an absent being…",* is in negation of this belief. Some say that it refers to *jahr mufrit* (excessive loudness) which causes distress to others, e.g. a sleep of someone is disturbed. This is the interpretation of Imaam Abu Hanifah's prohibition (of Thikr jahr), otherwise *jahr per se* is permissible.
………….. It is thus apparent that *jahr* itself is not an ibaadat. If Thikr is believed to be the objective and *jahr* is adopted for some expediency such as warding off stray thoughts, gaining concentration, etc., then this will not be prohibited on condition there is no accompanying adverse factor.

Mufrit jahr is not permissible. There is *tafseel* (explanation) regarding moderate *jahr*. If the belief is that *jahr* itself is an act of thawaab, then this will not be permissible. It will be bid'at, except where it is established by the Shariah, e.g. Talbiyah during Hajj, Takbeeraat Tashreeq, etc. If the objective is Thikr, and moderate *jahr* is adopted for a beneficial purpose, then this will not be bid'at…… Similarly, *dharb (swaying movements of the head) is not an act of thawaab.* There are similar benefits (as have been explained) ………Thus, *dharb* is a medium (or a method) of obtaining the objective…. "

The *Thikr-e-Jahr* and the *Dharb* method (head movements, etc.) of the khaanqah are spiritual expediencies and remedies. Hakimul Ummat has therefore placed them in proper perspective. At times *jahr* becomes bid'at as Hadhrat Maulana Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) has explained.

While *Thikr jahr* does at times degenerate into bid'ah, *Thikr-e-khafi* is never described as bid'ah. It is the *Asal* (original), *Afdhal* and *Masnoon* method of Thikr commanded by the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. It is never described as bid'ah. Intelligence rebuffs the idea of the superiority of *Thikr-e-jahr* which has been labelled with a variety of unsavoury epithets, namely, *haraam, bid'at, makrooh, jahr mufrit* – and which can and does attract the evil attributes of *riya, ujub and takabbur* contaminating or destroying the *ikhlaas* of the thaakir. Never can it have superiority over the original Qur'aanic method of *Thikr-e-Khafi*. This claim by the honourable Mufti Sahib strains credulity. Never could the permissible method of *jahr* be superior even if it is devoid of evil and adverse factors. The Authorities of the Shariah have clarified that even if *Thikr Jahr* is free from adverse factors and accretions, then too *Thikr-e-Khafi* is *Afdhal*. Evidence for this has already been presented earlier. What is difficult to comprehend is the inability of a man of knowledge to understand the self-evident fact that the *Asal (Primary rule)* cannot be superseded by exceptions which are in conflict with the primary principle.

Further explaining the status of the khaanqah Thikr, Hakimul Ummat (rahmatullah alayh) says in his *Malfoothaat*: *"Islaah (self-reformation) is achieved by remedying the ailments of the nafs. Athkaar are like medicine and pills which could be prepared by studying the books of medicine. However, the need of a qualified medical practitioner is imperative for diagnosing the illness and prescribing a remedy. Similarly, Thikr formulae and ashghaal (spiritual exercises) are recorded in books. However, there is the need for a spiritual guide*

to diagnose the spiritual ailments of the nafs and to prescribe remedies for reformation."

Commenting on the objective of khaanqah Thikr and shaghl, Hadhrat Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) says: "In their letters, even men who have a high degree of sincerity mention their constancy in Thikr (i.e. the prescribed forms of Thikr). They request for dua. It seems that to them islaah of the nafs is insignificant. They regard Thikr (khaanqah-type Thikr) and shaghl to be the actual aim (maqsood) to be pursued. On the contrary, Islaah is the true objective. Thikr facilitates the achievement of Islaah of the Nafs. – *Malfoothaat*

Criticizing the degeneration of the khaanqahs of this era, Hakimul Ummat states: "Our Haji Sahib (rahmatullah alayh) said: 'A principle of the Mashaaikh of former times was the impartation of ta'leem to persons in accordance with their ability. For some, they devised domestic work, and on others they imposed some different type of activity. (It is not always these specific forms of Thikr). Now it has become the norm to instruct everyone with the Thikr of *Ism-e-Zaat* (Allaahu) 24,000 times, whether the poor soul survives or perishes. In fact, they do not even confine themselves to this form of Thikr. They dole out whatever comes to mind."

"Even with regard to *Dalaail-e-Khairaat,* I draw the attention of my friends to the considerable time required to recite a lengthy *manzil* (chapter). Instead of this, the same amount of time should be spent rather reciting the Durood Shareef which the entire Ummah recites in Salaat. Furthermore, this Durood was prescribed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)." – *Malfoothaat*

The aforementioned exposition by Hadhrat Hakimul Ummah, possibly the greatest Mujtahid in the sphere of Tasawwuf of recent eras, presents the true meaning of Tasawwuf or Masnoon Tasawwuf. In which there are no excesses.

Those who have accorded the practice of *Khatm-e-Khwaajgaan* and similar other *ashghaal* a status of almost Wujoob should take note of this sagacious advice of Hakimul Ummat.

Khaanqah auraad and ashghaal

About the poor state of the khaanqahs of this age, Hakimul Ummat says: "Sometimes when one suffers from spiritual ailments, e.g. *ujub, takabbur, riya, etc.,* then abundance of *athkaar and auraad* (the type of non-Masnoon Thikr practices of the khaanqahs) worsens the diseases. The need is for *mujaahadah* (struggling against the nafs) so that one does not become the victim of show and pride after having rendered a good deed. Islaah (reformation) has priority over *athkaar* and *auraad.*

The Mutaqaddimeen Sufiya paid particular heed to moral reformation. However, nowadays people are not concerned with this essential requisite. Despite staying in the company of Mashaaikh and devoting time to Thikr and shaghl, moral reformation is not achieved. The spiritual diseases remain uncured. The mureed on seeing some dreams considers himself to be a wali. It should be well understood that the habit of sinning cannot coexist with wilaayat (sainthood).

In every *halqah* (group) when customs become overwhelming, *haqaaiq* (truths and realties) are overshadowed. The *Maqsood* of Sulook (Tasawwuf) is

not *auraad* and *ashghaal.* Although these acts facilitate the obtainal of the *Maqsad,* the objective is self-reformation. As long as moral reformation has not been achieved, the full efficacy of *auraad* and *ashghaal* will not be attained. In fact, sometimes, on account of *ujub* and *kibr,* these (khaanqah) *auraad* and *ashghaal* constitute dangers." – *Malfoothaat*

This is the state of the khaanqahs in our era. They have degenerated into venues of ostentation and lifeless rituals unrelated to the Sunnah. The attitude and practice of the participants in these Thikr rituals convey the distinct impression that they believe that their Thikr and shaghl practices are the epitome and ultimate goal of Tasawwuf. The sheikhs of this era themselves sorely lack in the understanding of Tasawwuf and its *Maqaasid.* Stating candidly the condition of the sheikhs and khalifas of the age, Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) said:

"*Alas! Nowadays people (i.e. the mashaaikh) are unaware of the Maqsood. Khilaafat (appointing a khalifah) no longer has a standard. What service (i.e. of guiding mureeds) can they render? In fact, they (these unqualified dumb khalifahs) come within the scope of the Hadith:* ***"They are astray and they lead others astray."*** *On account of their fossilized minds, they lack discernment."*

Hadhrat Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) commenting on the corruption of present-day 'tasawwuf' said: "*When Tasawwuf becomes corrupt, it is transformed into either insanity or hereticism (zindaqah). When a delicate object decomposes, its stench is intense.*"

Tilaawat

Elaborating the aim of khaanqah Thikr, Hakimul Ummat said:

"The Mashaaikh generally instruct their mureeds to engage more in (certain forms of) Thikr than in tilaawat of the Qur'aan Majeed although tilaawat is superior. The reason for this is that in the initial stage the emphasis is on cultivating concentration. This is the special effect of Thikr.

The prescription of Thikr is in fact the preliminary step of tilaawat. When the ability of concentration has been acquired, the mureed will be able to recite the Qur'aan Majeed with perfection. The ultimate aim of Thikr is tilaawat of the Qur'aan Shareef. Once the necessary concentration has been developed, the mureed will engage more in tilaawat. What the unqualified spiritual guides do and teach, is beyond the scope of this discussion." – *Malfoothaat*

"The Mashaaikh of former times paid great attention to reformation of moral character. They underwent intense struggles and hardships to achieve this goal. Some worked for years in bathrooms; some spent years in the wilderness. During those times they did not pay much attention to (khaanqah-type) Thikr and shaghl. Their courage and resolve were great. They could bear the severest hardship. The *Baarah Tasbeeh* Thikr (the 12 prescribed tasbeehs – non-Sunnah) was considered to be very advanced while nowadays this is the elementary instruction issued to mureeds."

Thikr Jahr in the Khaanqah

Commenting on *Thikr Jahr,* Hakimul Ummat said: "In *Thikr Jahr,* the Fuqaha have explained that such Thikr is permissible as long as a musalli or a sleeping person is not disturbed. On the basis of this principle, I do not permit *Thikr Jahr* (in the Khaanqah) from 12 pm until after Zuhr Athaan. Similarly, during the night time from after Isha until Tahajjud, there is no permission for *Thikr Jahr*. During the time that it is allowed, there is no permission for *Thikr-e-mufrit (excessive loudness)*. When mureeds are sleeping, I do not permit even silent Thikr with a hum. They have to make Thikr in their hearts in complete silence." – *Malfoothaat*

It will be appropriate and very salubrious at this juncture of discussing the Mufti Sahib's khaanqah Thikr 'proof', to apprize him of the view and fatwa of the Chief of all the Khaanqas of our Akaabir Chishti Mashaaikh. The following question was posed to Qutubul Aalam Hadhrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (rahmatullah alayh):

Question: "In Ramadhaan Shareef, in the Musjid during Taraaweeh Namaaz after performing four raka'ts, if all the musallis collectively recite Tasbeeh and make Dua, and with the niyyat of proclaiming the glory, grandeur and glitter of Islam, they recite the Kalimah *'Laa ilaha illallaah'* with *jahr* (loudly), will this be permissible or not?"

Hadhrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi responded:

"To make Thikr in this manner after the jalsah (sitting) during the Taraaweeh has not been narrated from the Sahaabah and Taabieen. Therefore, this *ha'it (specific form) is bid'at.* It is mentioned in *Al-Waaqiaat*: *'Reciting Surah Faatihah after the Fardh Salaat on occasions of events of upheaval (such as calamity, fear and disaster, etc.) is Makrooh (Tahrimi) because it is Bid'at in view of the fact that it has not been narrated from the Sahaabah and Taabieen.'*

It is also stated in Bahrur Raa-iq that it has been narrated from Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that he heard a group of people had gathered in the Musjid and were reciting *Lailaha illal laah* and Durood on Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) audibly *(jahran).* Then he went to them and said: *"During the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) we did not practise in this manner. I do not consider you except as mubtadieen (innovators).'* He continued saying so until he expelled them."

On the basis of these two evidences, even though Thikr is *mutlaqan jaa-iz,* but to change a special form which had prevailed during *Quroon-e-Thalaathah* (the three noble eras of Islam) is bid'at. Hence, despite Kalimah Tayyibah being permissible *jahran* on its occasions of permissibility, but during the sitting of Taraaweeh this practice is not proven, hence to do so is bid'at. In addition the masses will think that this practice is Sunnat. A mubah (permissible practice) which the masses believe to be Sunnat is bid'at.

It is mentioned in Aalamgheeriyah (Fataawa Hindiyyah): *'The practice which is done after Salaat is Makrooh because the juhhaal (ignoramuses) will believe it to be Sunnat or even Waajib. Every Mubah (permissible practice) which leads to this is Makrooh. So is it reported in Az-Zaahidi.'*

Thus, it is bid'at to make Thikr in this manner despite Thikr *per se* of Kalimah Tayyibah with *jahr* being permissible. However, at this occasion this *hai't* is not proven from *Quroon-e-Thalaathah.* On the contrary, this is an occasion of *Ikhfa'*, hence it is bid'at. Furthermore, in this practice there is the danger of corrupting the Aqeedah (belief) of the masses. And Allah knows best." – *End of Hadhrat Gangohi's dissertation.* (Tazkiratur Rasheed)

The Qur'aan Majeed says: *"And, none takes lesson except the People of Intelligence."* From the aforementioned *faqeehaanah* (juridical and wise) exposition of Hadhrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (rahmatullah alayh), every unbiased, intelligent seeker of the Haqq will observe the following salient aspects which clinches the whole dispute in which the venerable Mufti Sahib has become mired:

(a) Despite Hadhrat Gangohi being a Khaanqah Shaikh, who engaged in *khafeef* (very light) *Thikr bil Jahr* , he unequivocally branded the specific form of collective loud Thikr as being bid'at.

(b) The collective loud Thikr is bid'at because this practice did not exist in the initial three noble eras of Islam.

(c) The validity of the Abstention argument is confirmed by Hadhrat Gangohi, namely, this practice did not exist in the Sunnah, hence it is bid'ah.

(d) The authenticity of the narration of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is vindicated. Hadhrat Gangohi did not argue away the act of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) with any of the defective interpretations which the votaries of bid'ah attribute to the said narration. On the contrary, he cited it from an authentic Kitaab of Fiqh, *Bahrur Raa-iq,* as evidence in refutation of bid'ah. Despite being a Chishti Shaikh practising *Thikr bil Jahr* in his Khaanqah, he upheld the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), and did not lamely argue it away in order to justify and vindicate the practices of the khaanqah. He was a Man of Ilm and Taqwa. Hadhrat Gangohi (rahmatullah alayh) along with being an *Aashiq* and an *Aarif Billaah*, was a *Faqeeh* whose primary function was to guard the Shariah and the beliefs of the masses.

We trust that the venerable Mufti Sahib being an upholder of khaanqah practices, now sees the way clear for accepting the authenticity of the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) and the validity and wisdom of Hadhrat Mas'ood's act of expelling from the Musjid those who had engaged in *collective loud Thikr.* Hadhrat Gangohi's presentation of the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is a glowing affirmation of the authenticity of the narration. The authenticity is further enhanced by its appearance in an authoritative Kitaab of Fiqh.

(e) When the masses see Ulama and Sulaha engaging in Thikr practices, they will naturally infer that such acts are Sunnat, and when they see the *iltizaam* with which these practices are observed by the Ulama, then they naturally and justifiably begin to believe that these acts of 'ibaadat' are Waajib.

(f) The principle of existence and non-existence of an ibaadat practice during *Khairul Quroon* is an important and a necessary determinant and criterion for all practices of Thikr which are executed in the full view of the masses.

(g) Khaanqah practices should not be cited as a basis for justifying acts of Thikr which have no basis in the Sunnah.

(h) There is a stark difference in *Thikr bil jahr* conducted in the privacy of the khaanqah and in *Thikr bil jahr collectively* executed in public Musaajid frequented by the masses. While the former does not corrupt the beliefs of the masses nor develop into bid'ah in which the masses become entrapped, the latter undoubtedly corrupts the Aqeedah of the masses and develops into bid'ah.

(i) **It is imperative that collective loud Thikr practices which were not in vogue during the era of the Noble Ages, not be advertised in public Musaajid. Any khaanqah practice should be confined to the four walls of the khaanqah or to private homes of the mureedeen who engage in such practices.**

Athkaar for the masses?

"The Mashaaikh in former times would not prescribe *athkaar* and *ashghaal* to the masses. Nowadays, there prevails astonishing disorder in the ranks of the Sufis. They prescribe *Thikr* and *shaghl* to just anyone. The consequences of this are evil. These people become involved in many errors. Then it becomes difficult to extricate them from such errors." [*Malfoothaat*]

This advice should prove salutary for the venerable Mufti Sahib and the 'shaikhs' of *Khatm-e-Khwaajgaan.*

Khafeef Jahr

In another *Malfooth*, Hadhrat Thaanvi says: "Listen carefully! The expediency of *Thikr bil Jahr* among the Chishtiyyah is for the *Thaakir's* voice to reach his own ears in order to ward off stray thoughts. This aim is acquired from *khafeef jahr* (slightly audible). Excessive loudness is a futile act which is reprehensible."

Jahr is an expediency – a temporary measure in the Khaanqah Thikr programme. The participants in these loud collective public Thikr programmes have no understanding of *khafeef jahr.* Why should they bother to gain this understanding when the intention is *ujub and riya?* They know not what they are doing. Unable to distinguish between right and wrong, right and left, truth and falsehood, they perform to the gallery and then believe that they have attained lofty spiritual heights with their swaying and shouting.

Ignorant shaikhs

On the ignorance of today's sheikhs, Hakimul Ummat said: "The degree of ignorance regarding the reality of the

Tareeq has degenerated to the level that even those who are known as mashaaikh are unaware and lack knowledge of the Path.”

The statements and comments of Hakimul Ummat and of other Mashaaikh on the topic of khaanqah Thikr are too numerous to mention here. The samples of such comments presented here should suffice to remove the haze from the state of confusion which the venerable Mufti Sahib has spun around the khaanqah Thikr programmes which have been promoted to the pedestal of Shar’i *daleel.*

It is futile for the Mufti Sahib to present the personal Thikr practices of the Akaabir Sufiya and Ulama in support of the loud collective Thikr programmes which are nowadays being conducted in the Musaajid. These cosmopolitan Musaajid frequented by Muslims of a variety of persuasion are not the venues for the remedies which have been devised by the Sufiya. The problem today is that those who prescribe these non-Sunnah forms of *athkaar* and those who participate in these programs are equally in the dark. They gather firewood in the dark, not knowing on what they are setting their hands.

Not even the Mashaaikh of the Khaanqahs present their Thikr and shaghl practices in substantiation of the bid’ah collective Thikr programmes which the small-timers innovate in the name of Tasawwuf. If these small-time sheikhs and khalifahs correctly employ their *Aql*, they will not fail to discern the *khuraafaat* and *bid’ah* which they have fabricated in the name of Tasawwuf.

The honourable Mufti Sahib’s dissertation pertaining to the khaanqah Thikr programmes is a redundant exercise. We acknowledge the permissibility, worth and

value of the khaanqah *athkaar and ashghaal.* We are related to that system. We are related to the Chishtiyya Akaabireen. We subscribe to this gracious system. But what the deviant 'sufis' have innovated in the Musaajid today in this country, has no relationship with the khaanqah practices. The loud collective Thikr performances enacted for public consumption in the Musaajid are in fact *Bid'ah Sayyiah* as was confirmed by Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). Despite the Mufti Sahib's misguided attempt to debunk and dismiss the Fatwa and action of this *Jaleelul Qadr* Sahaabi whom Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) eulogized, it (Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's Fatwa) fits the current loud collective Thikr programmes perfectly. Insha'Allah, this sacred Fatwa will be discussed in greater detail in the ensuing pages.

Not a Daleel

Now since we have no *ishkaalaat* (queries and doubts) regarding the *audible Thikr* of the khaanqas, there is no need to respond to the khaanqah practices which the Mufti Sahib has enumerated. However, those Muslims who are not associated with the khaanqas, especially with the Chishtiyya Order, ridicule the honourable Mufti for his misguided presentation of khaanqah practices as proof for the loud collective Thikr programmes. In the armoury of Shari Dalaa-il, the 'daleel' of khaanqah practice is nonsensical and laughable.

The honourable Mufti Sahib is a member of the *Ahl-e-Ilm.* It should be simple for him to understand that issues of permissibility and impermissibility, issues requiring fatwa of the Shariah, need to be examined in the light of

the *Dalaa-il of the Shariah*, not on the basis of khaanqah remedies which are unrelated to the Sunnah and which the Akaabireen themselves unanimously explain are not acts of ibaadat *per se.* In fact, they themselves say that the assignment of incumbency or a higher status than permissibility to these practices is *Bid'ah.*

The Mufti Sahib is required to adhere to the proper *Dalaail* methodology of the Shariah to substantiate his claim. We need not explain these *Dalaa-il* to him. He is an honourable Mufti and a Shaikhul Hadith who is supposed to be aware. But, it is lamentable and painful for us to observe that the venerable Mufti Sahib has presented his booklet in the style and aura which are associated with the publications of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah, notably the bid'atis of Bareilwi, when they criticize the Ulama of Deoband.

Campaigning and Canvassing

The corruption is intense among the sheikhs and their khalifahs in our day. Loud collective Thikr programmes are promoted. The sheikh goes on tours campaigning for collective Thikr performances in the Musaajid, and canvassing for mureeds. Indeed they are astray and mislead others as the Hadith says. Commenting on the despicable campaigning of the 'sufis' of this age, Hakimul Ummat said:

"In this age there exists the disease of canvassing for mureeds. A mureed strives to rope in others to become the disciples of his sheikh."

THE MUFTI'S RESPONSE TO THE OBJECTIONS

(1) Responding to the criticism of the loud collective Thikr, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: "Objection 1: Allah Ta'ala says in the Noble Qur'an: "Call out to your Creator silently and fearfully." (Al-A'raaf: 55) In another verse Allah Ta'ala says: "And remember your Lord fearfully and silently in your heart; do not remember Him too loudly." (Al-A'raaf: 205) These two verses *suggest* that dua and zikr should be made silently".

These are the two verses which are cited to prove that silent Thikr is best and commanded by Allah Ta'ala. It is incorrect for the Mufti Saheb to aver that these two verses 'suggest' silent dua and Thikr. In these two verses, Allah Ta'ala issues *explicit commands* to observe dua and Thikr silently. These verses do not '*suggest*' silence. They *positively command* observance of silence when making dua and Thikr. The command is so explicit and emphatic that some authorities claim that it is for *Wujoob* (compulsion). The general view is that even if it is not for *Wujoob*, then the lesser category of *Istihbaab* will most definitely be applicable. The Mufti's claim about a mere suggestion in these two gracious verses is therefore utterly baseless – devoid of substance, unbefitting of a man of Ilm.

The venerable Mufti Sahib further claims: *"According to the majority of commentators, the first verse quoted above was revealed regarding dua and not regarding zikr."* Indeed the Mufti Sahib has degenerated to the level of grabbing at straws in his futile attempt to refute the objection which has been directed against the bid'ah loud

collective Thikr programmes. A subtle attempt has been made here to convey the impression that the majority of the Mufassareen has deleted *Thikr* from the scope of this aayat. But for this claim, the Mufti Sahib has not provided an iota of substantiating evidence.

The Mufti Sahib has only presented the explanation of the aayat given in Ruhul Ma'aani. Nowhere in the tafseer of the aayat does Ruhul Ma'aani contend that *Thikr* is excluded from the scope of the aayat. In fact, Ruhul Ma'aani also mentions the view of those who say that the meaning of 'dua' in the context of the aayat is *'Ibaadat'* which applies to *Thikr* as well. Further, Ruhul Ma'aani's tafseer does not exclude *Thikr* from the scope of the aayat. It only presents the explanation of the verse.

Explaining this aayat, Tafseer Mazhari states: *"Make His Thikr and ibaadat, and ask Him for your needs."* Although the aayat mentions dua specifically, Tafseer Mazhari bringing *Thikr* within its scope, says: *"Know that Thikr in general is ibaadat."* In the explanation of this verse, Tafseer Mazhari brings the Hadith: *"(Allah Ta'ala says): I am with him (My servant) when he makes My Thikr. If he makes My Thikr (i.e. remembers Me) in his heart, then I too remember him in My Heart...."* Although the text of the aayat states, 'dua', Mazhari as well as other Mufassireen extrapolate the rules of *Thikr* from it. Thus, Tafseer Mazhari continues: *"This Hadith applies to both Thikr jahr and Thikr khafi. Some persons had the impression that this Hadith indicates the superiority of jahr over khafi. However, this is devoid of substance.......There is consensus of the Ulama that silent Thikr is afdhal and loud Thikr is bid'ah...."*

We have already discussed this aspect earlier on. We are repeating parts of the tafseer here merely to show that the Mufassireen bring *Thikr* within the scope of this aayat. They have not excluded it as the Mufti Sahib has endeavoured to convey. In the tafseer of this aayat, Mazhari presents a detailed elaboration on the question of *Thikr*, not only Dua. The Ahaadith pertaining to silent dua have been cited by the Mufassireen and Ulama in substantiation of the superiority of silent *Thikr*. It is quite clear that the authorities regard Dua also as a form of *Thikr*. Undoubtedly, dua too is *Thikr*. All acts of ibaadat and *taa-at (obedience) are ibaadat (worship),* which are forms of *Thikr*. Hence Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"Every obedient person is a Thaakir* (one who makes Thikr)." When a Muslim ascertains the Shariah's law pertaining to an act which he contemplates, and executes it in accordance with the Shariah to gain Allah's Pleasure, then he is a *Thaakir*. His remembrance *(Thikr)* of Allah Ta'ala constrains him to ascertain the law of the Shariah, hence the Hadith describes him as a *Thaakir*.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has used Ma-aariful Qur'aan in an attempt to consolidate the idea that this aayat refers exclusively to dua, and that Thikr is beyond its scope. To rebut this attempt, we shall put it very mildly that the honourable Mufti Sahib has not been candid in citing from Ma'aariful Qur'aan. In the explanation of this aayat, Hadhrat Muhammad Mufti Shafi (rahmatullah alayh), the author of Ma-aariful Qur'aan, states: *"In these two words (of this aayat), two important etiquettes of Dua and* ***Thikr*** *are explained."* Deleting the word, *Thikr,* from the tafseer of Ma-aariful

Qur'aan, for obvious reasons, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"According to Ma'aariful Qur'an, amongst the etiquettes of dua is that it should be made humbly and silently."*

What has constrained the venerable Mufti Sahib to embark on this misrepresentation which is pure *Kitmaanul Haqq* (concealment of the truth)? Why did the Mufti Sahib not state the factual position? Why did he not say: *"According to Ma'aariful Qur'an, amongst the etiquettes of dua and* ***Thikr*** *is that it should be made humbly and silently*?"

Imaam Raazi (rahmatullah alayh), in his Tafseer Kabeer, explaining this aayat, says: *"There are two views. Some said that it means 'Make his ibaadat'. Others say it is dua."*

It should be understood that those who hold the dua view, do not negate Thikr. They do not exclude Thikr from the scope of the aayat and from the *hukm of khafi.*

The honourable Mufti Sahib, despite loudly advocating the case of loud Thikr against silent Thikr, is ominously silent regarding the following explanation which Ma-aariful Qur'aan presents in the discussion of this aayat: *"...It was the practice of the Salf-e-Saaliheen to apply great effort to* ***Thikr*** *and Dua and most of the time they were engrossed (in these acts of ibaadat), but no one could hear their voices......"*

After explaining the etiquettes of dua in the tafseer of this aayat, Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) says: *"This explanation is in regard to making dua for one's needs. If dua in this context is taken to mean Thikr and ibaadat, then too according to the Ulama-e-Salf* ***Thikr sirr is superior to Thikr jahr*********Infact,***

even according to them (the Mashaaikh Chisht) jahr fi-nafsihi (per se) in Thikr is not desireable *although it is permissible."* The thrust and conclusion of the explanation of the aayat in Ma-aariful Qur'aan is the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi*. Alas! The venerable Mufti Sahib has opted for ignoring this irrefutable fact which stands out conspicuously in all the kutub of Tafaseer. Affirmation of the superiority of both *silent Thikr and silent dua,* the Mufti Sahib's partial acknowledgment, namely, *"Thus making dua silently is better than doing so aloud.",* is highly improper to say the least. For better intellectual registration, let us reiterate what we have cited a few lines above, from Ma-aariful Qur'aan: ***"The tahqeeq of the Ulama-e-Salf in this as well, is that Thikr Sirr is better than Thikr Jahr."***

The Mufti Sahib cites from Ruhul Ma'aani the Hadith narrated by Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash'ari (radhiyallahu anhu) in which it is said that 'a group of people who tired themselves by making dua very loud', was admonished by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who said: "O people have mercy on yourselves……" The Mufti Sahib's purpose in citing this Hadith at this particular juncture is to show that the aayat under discussion is confined to dua because Ruhul Ma'aani presented it in the tafseer of this aayat.

This very same Hadith is presented in Tafseer Mazhari as follows: *"…. the Hadith of Abu Musa" He said: "When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) went on the expedition of Khaibar, the people (the Sahaabah) climbed up a valley and raised their voices with Takbeer. Then Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Have mercy on your souls…."*

In this regard, Imaam Raazi (rahmatullah alayh) states in his Tafseer Kabeer: *"The third proof (for Ikhfa') is the Hadith in which Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari narrates that they (the Sahaabah) were on an expedition. They climbed up a valley and begain raising their voices with Takbeer and Tahleel (reciting Lailaha il lallaah). Then Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Have mercy on your souls..."*

These kutub of Tafseer as well as other Tafaseer mention with clarity that the Sahaabah who had raised their voices, were reciting *takbeer* and *tahleel*. Besides the explicit mention of this fact, it is just logic that they were not making dua on top of their voices whilst they were climbing up the hill. For further confirmation, let us examine the kutub of Hadith. Muslim Shareef narrates this Hadith as follows:

"Abu Musa (radhiyallahu anhu) said: 'We were with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) on a journey. The people began reciting Takbeer loudly. Then Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'Have mercy on your souls..."

Narrating another version of this same episode, Muslim reports: *"Abu Musa said that they were with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and they were climbing up the mountain pathway. Whenever a man would climb higher, he would exclaim: 'Lailaha illallahu wallaahu Akbar'. Then Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'You are not calling on a deaf being...."*

Commenting on this Hadith, Imaam Nawawi (rahmatullah alayh) says in his Sharah:

"Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said to them: 'Have mercy on your souls..." when they recited the Takbeer loudly."

Imaam Bukhaari (rahmatullah alayh) narrates this episode in his Saheeh as follows:

"Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari said: 'We were with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). When we climbed up the valley, we recited Tahleel and Takbeer. When our voices became loud, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'O people! Have mercy on your souls...." The following commentary appears in the *Haashiyah* of Bukhari Shareef:

"In Fath, Tabari said: 'In it (this Hadith) is the karaahiyat of raising the voice with dua and Thikr. And, this is the view of the majority of the Salf among the Sahaabah and Taabieen.' " Also in the *Haashiyah* of Bukhaari Shareef, the following commentary appears: *"Raising the voice: Ibn Bittaal said: 'The Ashaab of the authoritative Math-habs and others are unanimous in the view that raising the voice with takbeer and Thikr is not Mustahab.' "*

It is abundantly clear from all these authentic narrations that Rasulullah's command to the Sahaabah to lower their voices on the occasion mentioned in these Ahaadith, pertains to *takbeer* and *tahleel –**Thikr** – not to dua* as averred by the venerable Mufti Sahib. The attempt to surreptitiously pass off this incident as an episode of Dua, and not Thikr, is flabby, reckless and improper.

Noteworthy in regard to this particular Hadith in which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) commanded: *"Have mercy on your souls."*, is the fact that while the later Mufassirreen, many centuries after Khairul

Quroon, interpreted this Hadith as a prohibition of only *jahr-e-mufrit (excessive loudness),* The Aimmah Mujtahideen and the Fuqaha in general invariably cite this very same Hadith in substantiation of the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi*.

Then the Mufti Sahib, continuing with his response to the first Objection, attempts to restrict the second aayat, namely Aayat 205 of Surah A'raaf, to the Makki era. This aayat on the basis of this exceedingly narrow interpretion is applicable to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The general import and application of the aayat are denied by the honourable Mufti Sahib. In corroboration of his view he cites Allamah Suyuti and Mufti Khairuddeen Ramli (rahmatullah alayhima) while ignoring all the prominent and authoritative Tafaseer to which he had swiftly resorted for arguments on a variety of issues pertaining to this dispute.

In his attempt to refute the contention of *Ikhfa* based on Aayat 55 of Surah A'raaf, namely: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently…",* the honourable Mufti Sahib had quoted, albeit inappropriately from Tafseer Ruhul Ma'aani. However, with regard to the tafseer of the 'second verse', the venerable Mufti Sahib has opted to conveniently ignore Ruhul Ma'aani. Explaining this aayat, Ruhul Ma'aani says:

"This refers to every Thikr, for verily, ikhfa' has a greater role in ikhlaas (sincerity) and is closer to acceptance…………..It has been deducted on the basis of this aayat that ***Ikhfa' of Thikr is afdhal****. The Hadith reported by Imaam Ahmad supports this. (The Hadith is): Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "The best Thikr is silent Thikr." And, this is a reproach for the*

ignorant pretending sufis of our age with regard to what they are doing (their acts of bid'ah – such as loud collective Thikr in the Musaajid) – acts which are evil in terms of the Shariah, intelligence and custom (i.e. valid custom). Inna lillaahi wainna ilayhi raajioon."

Ruhul Ma'aani does not confine this aayat to the Makki period nor to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The verse has general application. It applies to all time and all people. Imaam Raazi (rahmatullah alayh) in his Tafseer Kabeer explicitly confirms this fact. Thus, he states: *"Know that Allah's statement: 'Remember your Rabb in your heart', although it is apparently addressing Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), it applies in general to all the Mutakallifeen (i.e. to all Muslimeen)."*

Although the Mufassireen explain the circumstance of the revelation of this aayat, they do not restrict the aayat's command to only Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The honourable Mufti Sahib has also conveniently forgotten to quote Ma-aariful Qur'aan's tafseer of the 'second verse' although he did resort to Ma-aariful Qur'aan in an attempt to acquire some argument to bolster his view pertaining to the 'first verse'. The reason for bypassing Ma-aariful Qur'aan with regard to the second aayat is quite obvious. There is absolutely no proof and no grounds for the Mufti Sahib in Ma-aariful Qur'aan's explanation of the second verse. Hadhrat Mufti Shafi (rahmatullah alayh), in Ma-aariful Qur'aan, deals elaborately with the rules of Thikr and dua. No where does he confine the second verse to the Makki era and to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

In fact, in the tafseer of the 'second verse', Mufti Shafi' (rahmatullah alayhi) explicitly states that the 'first

verse' brings within its scope Thikr and tilaawat as well. It is not confined to dua – an idea which the venerable Mufti (i.e. Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib) has unsuccessfully peddled. Thus, Ma'aariful Qur'aan in the course of its dilation on the second verse, explains the first verse as follows:

"These very same etiquettes of dua have been explained in another aayat in the beginning of Surah A'raaf, namely, "Call unto your Rabb with humility and silence." Its meaning is to make Thikr with a low tone. In other words, one adab of Thikr and tilaawat is to recite with a low tone........."

Referring to the 'second verse', Ma-aariful Qur'aan states: *"According to the Jamhoor, these two verses are the command pertaining to Mutlaq Thikr (Thikr in general) and its etiquettes......"*

Tafseer Mazhari also presents an elaborate tafseer of several pages on the 'second verse'. There is not even a reference to the suggested restriction of the *hukm* to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The aayat has been utilized as a basis for confirming the superiority of *Thikr Khafi,* hence during the course of the tafseer of this 'second verse', Mazhari states: ***"Verily it has been said that jahr with Thikr and dua is bid'ah, and the Sunnat in both of them is Ikhfa'*** *as the mas'alah has been explained in the tafseer of Allah's statement: 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence." (i.e. aayat 55 – the first verse).*

Tafseer Ruhul Bayaan also states with clarity: *"That this address (to Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam) applies to all creation (i.e. to all Muslimeen) is valid.....The Thikr ('in your heart', mentioned in this*

aayat) is with silent recitation, for verily, Ikhfa' has a greater role in Ikhlaas, and it is closer to acceptance. This Thikr is general bringing within its scope all forms of Athkaar, whether qiraa't, dua, etc. as has been stated in Al-Asraarul Muhammadiyyah. The fadhielat of Thikr is not restricted to tahleel, takbeer, tasbeeh and dua. In fact, every obedient servant of Allah is a Thaakir (according to the Hadith)."

There simply is no substantiation for the Mufti Sahib's restriction and confinement theory. It is utterly baseless and not worthy of consideration.

The venerable Mufti Sahib makes a futile endeavour to enlist the support of Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy Lucknowi (rahmatullah alayh) for his view of the superiority of loud Thikr. It is a gross misrepresentation to create the impression that Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) subscribed to superiority of *Thikr jahr*. His view on the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi* is conspicuous and categoric. Let us now examine his Fatwa on this issue. The following question and answer appears in *Majmuah Fataawa* of Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh):

"**QUESTION:** Nowadays after every Namaaz the people recite loudly four times *'Lailaha illallaah'* – three or four times. Then saying *'Allahu Akbar',* they shake their heads. Is there any substantiation for this in the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or the Sahaabah or in the era of Imaam A'zam or his Students. If this method is narrated (authentically) from someone (some senior of those eras), may we promote this practice? If it is not substantiated, then what is the hukm of this

customary practice? Is it necessary to prevent people from it or to adopt silence. Furthermore, is it *afdhal* to recite audibly or silently those *Athkaar* which are substantiated in our Hanafi Math-hab?"

ANSWER: This type of Thikr is not substantiated from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) nor the Sahaabah nor the four Imaams and others (i.e. other Fuqaha). The Hanafi Ulama as well as the Ulama of the other Math-habs have explicitly stated that it is Mustahab to make Thikr silently after Namaaz. However, it appears from some Ahaadith that during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), some Sahaabah would audibly recite the takbeer after Namaaz.

However, the Shurraah (Commentators) of Hadith have said that this *Thikr jahri* applies to Jihad situations. They maintain that in relation to *jahr*, it is *afdhal* to recite silently. Some other Shurraah have said that this was done occasionally. However, they prohibit *Iltizaam* (i.e. to observe a practice with constancy as if it is Waajib). In the kitaab, *Al-Mudkhal* of Ibnul Haaj Maaliki, the following appears:

"Regarding the narration of Ibn Zubair that during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), after he made the Salaam of the Salaat, he would recite in a raised voice, 'Lailaha illallaah wahdahu.............', and the narration of Ibn Abbaas that after completing Salaat the people would raise their voices with Thikr, there are two answers:

First is that which Imaam Shaafi has explained in Kitaabul Umm: 'Both the Imaam and the Ma'moom (the muqtadi) should engage in Thikrullaah silently after ending the Salaat except that it is incumbent (for the

Muqtadi) to learn from the Imaam (what to recite). In this case the Imaam should recite audibly until he has understood that the muqtadi has learnt (the Thikr). Then he should revert to silent Thikr, for Allah Ta'ala says (in the Qur'aan): 'Do not make your voice loud nor (totally) silent.', i.e. with dua. 'La-tajhar, i.e. do not raise. La-tukhaafit, i.e. not too silent. You, yourself should be able to hear it.

The jahr which has been narrated by Ibn Zubair and Ibn Abaas is jahr for a short while so that the people could learn from him (Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam). This explanation is because the majority of narrations which we have recorded do not mention Thikr after the Salaam nor takbeer." This is Imaam Shaafi' who has explained it (the narrations mentioning audible Thikr after Salaat) in the light of Ta'leem. When the ta'leem has been served, then he (the Imaam) should stop (his audible Thikr). This (practice of ta'leem) is in conflict with today's custom of qiraa't, loud Thikr and ***congregating.*** *They do not intend ta'leem. On the contrary, their* ***intention is thawaab*** *(since they regard it to be the correct form of ibaadat).*

The second answer is what Abul Hasan Ibn Bittaal has explained in Sharh Saheeh Bukhaari when he explained the Hadith of Ibn Abbaas. It is probable that he related this to the Mujaahideen. If it is so, then it applies even today. When the Mujaahideen perform the five Salaat, it is Mustahab for them to recite takbeer aloud. They should raise their voices to instil fear in the enemy. If this is not the (acceptable) interpretation, then it (the practice of audible Thikr after Salaat) is ***Mansookh (abrogated) by***

virtue of Ijma'*. Not a single one of the Ulama is aware of it.*

In the same kitaab, *Al-Mudkhal,* it is mentioned: *"All should abstain from jahri Thikr after completing the Salaat if they are in jamaa't, for verily, it (Thikr jahr) is bid'ah."*

Allaamah Shaikhul Islam Badruddin Hanafi states in *Nihaayah, Sharah Hidaayah: "Abu Bakr Raazi said: 'Our Mashaaikh have said that there is no jahri takbeer other than during the days of Tashreeq or when confronting the enemy or robbers..."* In Nisaabul Ihtisaab it appears: *"It is Makrooh to recite takbeer audibly after Salaat. Verily, it is bid'ah except during the days of Nahr and Tashreeq."* There are numerous similar texts (ibaaraat) from which *Thikr jahri* is proven to be ***Makrooh*** with a few special exceptions. I have explained this in my treatise, *Sabaahatul Fikr Fil Jahr biz Zikr.*

The summary of this is: If besides the Days of Tashreeq, *Thikr jahr* is practised sometimes then there is nothing wrong on condition that the *jahr* is not excessive. If the objective of the *jahr* is ta'leem, then this is permissible. However, without these objectives, making special arrangements for it and observing it with *Iltizaam* is in conflict with the Tareeq of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Salf-e-Saaliheen." *(End of Maulana Abdul Hayy's exposition)*

In this elaboration, Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) has sounded the death knell to the bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances which the honourable Mufti Sahib so dishonourably advocates and promotes.

In citing Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hay Lucknowi (rahmatullah alayh) in an extremely lame endeavour to eke out support for his view on loud collective Thikr, the venerable Mufti Sahib has perpetrated a grave act of injustice against Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy Sahib, as well as against the community of Islam. He has paraphrased Maulana Abdul Hayy's discussion on Thikr to present a thoroughly distorted and erroneous picture. Citing Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy, the venerable Mufti Sahib says:

"Hazrat Moulana Abdul Hay Looknawi (Rahmatullah alaih) has explained this verse in detail in his kitab Sabaahatul Fikr Fil Jahri Biz-Zikr. A summary of his discussion is given hereunder:
1. This command of Allah Ta'ala is only for the sake of ease and not for compulsion.
11. This verse is not general in prohibiting loud zikr rather it prohibits one from excessively screaming when making zikr. This has also been explained by Imaam Raazi (Rahmatullah alaih) where he says that the verse under discussion prohibits one from screaming when making zikr; as Allah Ta'ala says in another verse: 'Do not perform your Salaat too loudly and neither too softly; but rather adopt a moderate mode."

Before presenting the true version of Maulana Abdul Hayy, the following comments of the Mufti Sahib should be considered in comjunction with the aforementioned 'summary' which the honourable Mufti Sahib has proffered. The need for viewing this in conjunction is because Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh)

responds to both the fallacies in a single inter-connected reply. Now, the venerable Mufti Sahib avers:

"Thus the verse under discussion was revealed during the Makkan period of prophethood whilst the verse "When you complete your Haj rituals then remember Allah Ta'ala as you would remember your forefathers." was revealed during the Madinah period of prophethood. Regarding this verse all commentators of the Qur'an are unanimnous that during the Days of Ignorance, the Polytheists used to proudly remember their forefathers aloud; and so as to instruct them to remember Allah Ta'ala instead, this verse was revealed."

The Mufti Sahib has attempted to show in this argument that just as the mushrikeen were remembering their forefathers in loud recitation of poetry, similarly, the Qur'aan orders the Mu'mineen to remember Allah excessively and loudly during these days after execution of the Hajj rituals. It is in the context of the attempt to prove the superiority and necessity of 'loudness' in Thikr that the Mufti Sahib has adduced this aayat as his 'proof'.

The Mufti Sahib had earlier on also presented a Hadith as 'proof' for superiority of loud Thikr. He stated: *"Hazrat Abu Saeed Khudri (Radiyallahu anhu) narrates that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Make the zikr of Allah Ta'ala excessively to such an extent that people call you insane."*

Responding to these aforementioned claims made by the honourable Mufti Radhaahul Haq Sahib, Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) states in his *Majmuah Fataawa:*

"......If these people say that the Hadith: 'Make Thikr of Allah until the people say: 'Verily, he is mad.', indicates Thikr jahr, then the response is: We also say that jahr per se (nafs-e-jahr) is permissible. The conflict is in jahr mufrit (excessive loudness). The meaning of the Hadith is: Make abundant Thikr of Allah until they say: 'Verily, he is mad." Thus, the dalaalat (indication) of the Hadith is in fact, ***not on jahr at all****. Furthermore, the Qur'aanic aayaat indicate that Sirri Thikr is Mustahab or that the Thikr should be in such a moderate manner which is between jahr and sirr. Allah Ta'ala states: "Call on your Rabb with humility and silently. Verily, He does not love those who transgress the limits." Elsewhere, the Qur'aan says: "Make the Thikr of your Rabb in your heart with humility and silently, and less than jahr, morning and evening. And be not from among the ghaafileen." Imaam Raazi says in the tafseer of Allah's statement: 'Make Thikr of Allah in your heart: i.e. Make Thikr silently (sirran). And the meaning of Allah's statement: 'Doonal jahr bil qaul' (less than jahr) is 'doonal jahril mufrit' (less than excessive loudness. It means that the Thikr should be between mukhaafatah (total silence) and jahr."*

Baihqi in Shu'bul Imaan narrated from Sa'd Bin Maalik the Marfoo' Hadith: *"The best Thikr is (Thikr) Khafi, and the best rizq is that which is sufficient."* In Nihaayah – Sharah Hidaayah it is said: "According to us (i.e.the Ahnaaf) silence in Athkaar is Mustahab except in cases related with announcement such as Athaan and Talbiyah."

Numerous Hanafis (Hanafi Fuqaha) have stated so explicitly (i.e. that Thikr Khafi is Mustahab). It comes in Hidaayah: Verily, *jahr* with Thikr is bid'ah. The *Asal* in

Thikr is *Ikhfa'*. The summary is: Even if *jahr* is permissible, *mufrit jahr* is prohibited, and *Sirr* (silent Thikr) is better than even such *jahr* which is not *mufrit…….*" *(End of Maulana Abdul Hayy's elaboration).*

This explanation of Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy clarifies the following misrepresentations made by the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib:

(1) His attempt to show that Maulana Abdul Hayy is of the view that loud Thikr is better than silent Thikr. Maulana Abdul Hayy has categorically affirmed the superiority of silent Thikr in the aforementioned exposition.

(2) Both Maulana Abdul Hayy and Imaam Raazi have been cited out of context. Imaam Raazi's tafseer pertaining to 'excessive loudness' is the explanation of the words: *'doonal jahr bil qaul'*. It is unrelated to the earlier part of the aayat, namely: *"Remember your Rabb in your heart with humility and silence."* Imaam Raazi explicitly explains this as *'Sirri Thikr'*. Imaam Raazi's tafseer of the statement, *doonal jahr bil qaul*, is not an argument in favour of superiority for *Thikr jahr*. Both Imaam Raazi and Maulana Abdul Hayy categorically affirm the *Istihbaab* and superiority of *Thikr Khafi*.

(3) The Hadith regarding being branded 'mad', means abundant/excessive Thikr, not loud Thikr. Thus Maulana Abdul Hayy states explicitly: *"In fact, in this Hadith there is no indication for jahri Thikr."*

(4) The very explanation (mentioned in No.3) applies to the Qur'aanic verse which instructs observance of Thikr after execution of the Hajj rituals. There is not the slightest indication in the aayat for loud Thikr. The meaning is simply 'abundant Thikr'.

There is absolutely no support in the writings of Imaam Raazi and Maulana Abdul Hayy for the venerable Mufti Sahib's contended superiority of loud Thikr. The misrepresentation of the views of these two Ulama by the venerable Mufti Sahib is a lamentable travesty of the Haqq.

After the honourable Mufti Sahib has failed to extrapolate substantiation for his theory from the views of Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy and Imaam Raazi, he refers to Ruhul Ma'aani, and avers:

"This verse is explained in Ruhul Ma'aani in the following way: According to some scholars silent zikr is more virtuous when there is fear of insincerity or disturbance to others, but if there is no fear of insincerity or disturbance to others then loud zikr would be more virtuous. Similarly loud zikr would be more virtuous when one's intentions are either to teach others, or to bring delight to the heart, or to abstain from innovation, etc."

This is another flabby attempt – clutching at straws – to support a theory which militates against the *Ijma'* of the Sahaabah and the Salf-e-Saaliheen, and which is in violation of the explicit command and spirit of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. While Ruhul Ma'aani has mentioned this view of 'some', it is not the official view of the Sahaabah and Salf-e-Saaliheen. It is not the view of

the Fuqaha of the Four Math-habs nor of other Fuqaha. The authorities of the Shariah unanimously state the superiority of *Ikhfa'*. This Consensus is not shattered or affected in any way by the view of a tiny minority of centuries-later Ulama.

This is a view which clashes with the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. It is in conflict with the official tafseer which all the Mufassireen proffer for the two verses under discussion. It is ludicrous to present this unsubstantiated view of a miniscule minority of unknown Ulama or Sufis in negation of what is an established view since the time of the Sahaabah. When even the Chishtiyyah Mashaaikh who subscribe to *Thikr Bil Jahr*, especially for beginners in the Path, affirm the superiority and originality of *Thikr-e-Khafi*, then the presentation of this feeble view in a bid to demote what the Qur'aan and Sunnah promote, is an act of extravagation unbefitting one who dons the Mantle of Knowledge of the Deen.

Furthermore, the variegated factors which regulate the permissibility of *Thikr jahr* amply illustrate the secondary status of this type of Thikr. Its permissibility is governed by strict stipulations whereas *Thikr-e-Khafi* is unfettered by these conditions. While *Thikr-e-Jahr* may be better according to some Ulama, they too refute the affirmation of a higher status to it than *Ibaahat* (permissibility), as well as *Iltizaam.*

It should also not escape attention that this minority, unsubstantiated and obscure view does not support the loud collective Thikr programmes in the Musjid which the venerable Mufti Sahib is advocating and promoting. Even this view is applicable to individuals making Thikr in solitude. It cannever be applicable to people sitting in

the Musjid. The restricting conditions imposed by the Scholars holding this view make it abundantly clear that *Thikr Jahri* may not be practised in the Musaajid.

The cosmopolitan Musaajid are always frequented by musallis at all times of the day. The disturbance and distraction of the chanters who perform with swinging heads are bound to adversely affect the Salaat and acts of ibaadat of the other Musallis. As for the loud collective Thikr programmes held in the Musaajid in these days, the following tafseer in Ruhul Ma'aani is applicable:

"It is deducted from this verse that Ikhfa' of Thikr is afdhal. And, this is supported by the Hadith reported by Imaam Ahmad that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:
"The best Thikr is Khafi." *This is a reproach for the ignorance of the impostor Sufis of our age, for the evils they perpetrate – evil according to the Shariah, intelligence and (even) Urf. Inna lillaahi wa inna ilayhi raajioon."*

(2) Answering an imagined objection, the venerable Mufti Sahib says:

"Objection 2: In an authentic Hadith Abu Musa Ash'ari (Radiyallahu anhu) has narrated: "We were once with Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) in a certain battle. Whenever we crossed a valley or ascended a high place, we raised our voices reciting Takbeer. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) approached us and said: 'O people have mercy on yourselves for verily you are not calling out to one who is deaf or absent. You are calling out to One who is All-Hearing and All-Seeing

and who is nearer to you than the neck of your conveyance."

According to the Mufti Sahib his critics claim that "this Hadith commanded the Sahabah to take the name of Allah Ta'ala silently." Then the venerable Mufti Sahib meanders off into an exposition, citing Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy to prove that the instruction in the Hadith was to lower the voices, not to command complete silence. We find no fault with this exposition. We are not aware of the critics who utilize this Hadith for the view of total prohibition of *Thikr-e-Jahr*. As far as we are concerned, there is no contention. We do not claim that *jahr* is totally haraam. This never was our contention nor stance. We ourselves practise *Thikr Bil Jahr* in solitude and privacy. We are spiritually related to the Chishti Silsilah. There is, therefore, no need for us to contest what the venerable Mufti Sahib has presented on this score. This argument of the Mufti Sahib concerns one who actually claims that this particular Hadith prohibits *Thikr bil Jahr.*

While the need to respond on this score is obviated, we need to comment on the Mufti Sahib's exposition from another angle. There are some incongruencies in the Mufti Sahib's discourse on this Hadith. He avers:

"This Hadith forbids one from screaming when making zikr as is pointed out in other narrations. When Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) heard the Sahaba screaming at the top of their voices he (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Have mercy on your-selves." This does not mean that loud zikr in general is forbidden as"

(1) This was for the sake of ease.

(2) *Loud zikr was forbidden only because it was against the general habit of the Sahaba."*

There are two distinct issues in this connection: screaming and moderate loud Thikr. It appears that the Mufti Sahib has confused these two issues. He says that this Hadith does not forbid 'loud zikr in general'. Then in his point No.2 above, he says that "loud Thikr was against the general habit of the Sahaba", hence Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) forbade it (loud Thikr). The contradiction and absurdity are self-evident. If loud Thikr was against the general habit of the Sahaabah, why should it be forbidden? What is there to forbid when in fact it was their general and permanent practice to engage in silent Thikr? So what does the Mufti Sahib mean by his averment: *'Loud zikr was forbidden only because it was against the general habit of the Sahaba.'*

As the Mufassireen have explained, this Hadith prohibits screaming – excessive loudness. It does not prohibit that *jahr* which the Qur'aan describes as *'doonal jahr bil qaul'* (with a voice less than loudness). This Hadith has no relationship with the 'general habit of the Sahaba' – their habit which was *Thikr-e-Khafi*. The Hadith only prohibits excessive loudness which is tantamount to screaming. Thus, the Mufti Sahib's averment in this regard is unintelligent and futile at this juncture of the argument.

Secondly, the venerable Mufti with his averment: *"Loud zikr was forbidden only because it was against the general habit of the Sahaba",* has confirmed that the normal practice of the Sahaabah was *Thikr-e-Khafi.* When he is aware of this irrefutable fact, then what

constrains him to propagate his superiority theory – that loud Thikr is better than silent Thikr?

The other incongruity in his argument to the 'second objection', is his self-contradiction pertaining to the 'screaming' Hadith. In his booklet, just one page before he argues that the Hadith prohibits only 'screaming' in Thikr and dua, the venerable Mufti Sahib mismanipulated the Hadith. On page 75 of his booklet, he presents the very same Hadith (i.e. the one in which they were commanded: *'Have mercy on yourselves,'*) to support his contention: *"According to the majority of commentators the first verse quoted above was revealed regarding dua and not regarding zikr."*

Although the venerable Mufti Sahib has failed to adduce any corroborating Shar'i evidence for this arbitrary claim, he clumsily tendered the Hadith pertaining to 'screaming' as his 'proof' for the fallacy that Thikr is beyond the scope of the aayat. When the Mufti Sahib produced this Hadith on page 73 of his booklet to bolster his contention, it conveniently caused the initial portion of the Hadith to disappear. He did not cite it. He contented himself with the claim and partial citation of the Hadith. Thus he said: *"According to the narration of Hazrat Abu Musa Ash'ari (Radiyallahu anhu), Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said to a group of people who tired themselves by making dua very loud: "O people have mercy on yourselves (do not scream when making dua)…"* This much of the Hadith he proferred to support the claim that the Qur'aanic aayat discussed pertains to only dua, not at all to Thikr.

Now after he has cited the full Hadith on page 75 as proof for another argument, it escaped the memory of the

venerable Mufti Sahib that he had predicated this Hadith exclusively with dua. From the text of the Hadith cited by the Mufti Sahib himself, it is clear that the Hadith does not relate to dua. The Sahaabah were not engaging in dua. The Mufti Sahib had even refrained from mentioning the circumstances of the episode. He contented himself with the averment, *'a group of people who had tired themselves by making dua very loud'*. This distorted production of the Hadith conveys to the unwary the impression that there was a group of Sahaabah who were engaging in dua and screaming at the top of their voices.

Although we have already discussed this Hadith earlier, we draw attention to it at this juncture to show the self-contradiction and incongruency of the venerable Mufti's arguments. They were not making dua. They were not sitting in the Musjid making loud collective dua. They were on a Jihad expedition, climbing and descending a mountain. Furthermore, they were not tiring themselves. They were reciting *takbeer* and *tahleel* loudly as they ascended and descended. They were not such men who could become dehydrated and tired by 'screaming' a few duas or reciting the *takbeer* and *tahleel* loudly.

They were such men who reduced the then world superpowers to dust. They were men who fasted throughout the day on the battlefield and spent the night in ibaadat. This was their occupation and profession on the Jihad front. The question of tiring themselves has no relevance.

However, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) educated them in the *aadaab* of Thikr. While ascending and descending a mountain there was no need to proclaim *Takbeer* and to recite *Tahleel* at the top of the voice

because on such occasions they were addressing Allah Azza Wa Jal Who is Samee' (The Hearer), Baseer (The One Who sees) and Qareeb (The One Who is Very Near). On the battlefield it was a different matter. To instil fear and awe into the enemy, Islam's battle-cry is the *Takbeer* which is shouted at the top of the voice.

Now after having reproduced the Hadith in full as succour in a different argument, the venerable Mufti Sahib will acknowledge, at least to himself, that the Sahaabah were engaging in *Thikr, not dua.* Hence, he was constrained to state that the Sahaabah were actually engaging in *Takbeer*. Earlier we had reproduced the full Hadith in which it appears that the Sahaabah were loudly reciting *Takbeer* and *Tahleel*, not dua as the venerable Mufti Sahib had attempted to convey.

We humbly and respectfully say to the honourable Mufti Sahib that the mismanipulation bid to extravasate evidence from the Hadith for the fallacious theory of the superiority of loud Thikr is indeed dishonourable. When the endeavour is to bolster *baatil*, one sinks deeper into the quagmire of confusion.

(3) In his third response to objections of critics, the venerable Mufti Sahib says:
"Objection 3: It appears in one narration that "The best zikr is that which is silent." Another Hadith states: "Silent zikr which is not heard by the angels is seventy times more virtuous than zikr which is heard by the angels. This Hadith states that silent zikr is more virtuous than loud zikr."

Responding to this objection, the Mufti Sahib avers: *"Firstly both the Ahaadeeth mentioned are weak*

narrations as they have been narrated by weak narrators. On the other hand all the Ahaadeeth presented in this kitab thus far are all authentic Ahaadeeth."

The venerable Mufti Sahib has truly degenerated to an extremely low ebb in his frantic bid to produce evidence for his theory of the superiority of loud Thikr. His futile search for proof for his theory is obviously motivated by the desire to validate the loud collective Thikr bid'ah programmes which are incrementally being promoted in the Musaajid nowadays. The claim of 'weak' narrations is totally untenable and an insult to the illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen who cite these very same Ahaadith to affirm the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi.*

This exceptionally flimsy argument is devoid of substance. There are several aspects comprising the refutation of this drivel tendered by the venerable Mufti Sahib:

(1) While the Mufti Sahib considers these two Ahaadith unworthy for presentation for affirming the *afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr-e-Khafi*, the authoritative Mufassireen from whom the Mufti Sahib draws *all* the evidence for his theory of Thikr Jahr, cite these narrations in their arguments to establish the superiority of *Ikhfa'*. It is indeed perculiar that the venerable Mufti Sahib, in conflict with the illustrious Mufassireen, regards these two narrations unworthy as proof. When *all* the Mufassireen have deemed these narrations sufficiently worthy for further substantiation of the superiority of *Ikhfa'*, then of what worth is the preposterous claim of the Mufti Sahib?

In his Tafseer Kabeer, Imaam Raazi (rahmatullah alayh) presents five proofs for the superiority of *Ikhfa'*

(making Thikr and dua silently). Explaining his fourth proof, he says:

"The Fourth Hujjat: It is the Qaul of Rasulullah (alayhis salaam), 'The Dua in silence is the equivalent of 70 duas in alaaniyah' (i.e. in public or loudly – the opposite of sirr)."

The Mufti Sahib in dismissing the worthiness and validity of the '70 fold' Hadith, cited the following version: *"Silent zikr which is not heard by the angels is seventy times more virtuous than that zikr which is heard by the angels."* Although Imaam Raazi's narration does not mention the angels, it states the 70 times superiority of silent Thikr. Now it devolves on the venerable Mufti Sahib to dismiss as unworthy the Hadith presented by Imaam Raazi (rahmatullah alayh).

Tafseer Ruhul Ma-aani, in affirmation of the superiority of silent Thikr, cites the very same Hadith, namely: *"Between the silent dua and the loud dua there are 70 stages (i.e. the silent dua is 70 times more superior than the loud dua/Thikr)."* Does the honourable Mufti Sahib see his way clear to taking up cudgels with Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayhi) for having cited this supposedly unworthy Hadith in his tafseer, especially after he has misconstrued Allaamah Aalusi's views to eke out support for his fallacious theory?

Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh), also in Ruhul Ma-aani, presents the other allegedly 'weak' and unworthy Hadith, namely: *"The best Thikr is khafi"*, in corroboration of the superiority of silent Thikr. He attributes the Hadith to the narration by Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hambal (rahmatullah alayh). Was Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh) unaware of the requisite Hadith

principle on which the venerable Mufti Sahib justifies the dismissal of this Hadith? The Mufti Sahib has variously quoted Allaaama Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh) in his bid to bolster the 'basis' for collective loud Thikr. He should take cognizance of the Allaamah's views on these Ahaadith as well.

Tafseer Mazhari also presents the Hadith in which silent Thikr is described as 70 times more superior. And, even the Hadith, *"The best Thikr is khafi (Thikr)",* is adduced by Tafseer Mazhari as confirmation of the superiority of silent Thikr/dua.

In Ma-aariful Qur'aan, Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) presenting the 70 fold Hadith, states: *"Hadhrat Hasan Basri (rahmatullah alayh) said that there is superiority of 70 times for silent Thikr and dua over audible Thikr."* Hadhrat Mufti Shafi' also cites the other Hadith to affirm the superiority of silent Thikr – the Hadith which the venerable Mufti Sahib brands 'weak' and dismisses as unworthy for citation. But Hadhrat Mufti Shafi' (rahmatullah alayh) says in Ma-aariful Qur'aan: *"Imaam Ahmad, Ibn Hibbaan, Baihqi and others narrated from Hadhrat Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas (radhiyallahu anhu) that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'The best Thikr is khafi (Thikr), and the best rizq is that which is sufficient."*

Tafseer Baghawi also cites the 70 fold Hadith in the tafseer of silent dua/Thikr. *"Hasan (i.e. Hadhrat Hasan Basri) narrated that between the audible and silent dua are 70 stages (i.e. the silent dua is 70 times more meritorious than the audible dua)."*

The same Hadith is mentioned in Tafseer Khaazin in the tafseer of silent dua. The 70 fold Hadith mentioning

that even the guarding angels are unaware of this silent Thikr is presented also in Tafseerul Hawaari. The Hadith is narrated by Hadhrat Aishah (radhiyallahu anha).

Regarding the Hadith: *'The best Thikr is khafi (Thikr)',* Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) says in his *Majmuah Fataawa*: *"Baihqi in Shu'bul Imaan narrates this Hadith mar-fooan from Sa'd Bin Maalik."* (Mar-fooan is a Hadith in which the Chain of narrators links up with Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Maulana Abdul Hayy presents this Hadith to affirm the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi*. He does not assault the Hadith with the epithet of 'weakness' nor does any of the other Mufassireen.

In the light of this mass of evidence for the validity and authenticity of the two Hadith narrations explicitly stating the *afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr-e-Khafi* the attempt of the Mufti Sahib to assail their authenticity is ludicrous.

The strongest proof for the authenticity of these Hadith narrations is the acceptance by the Fuqaha of the Ummah – the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen. These narrations fully satisfy the principle of *Talaqqi bil Qubool.* Insha'Allah, this principle which authenticates narrations will be explained further on.

THE FUQAHA-E-MUJTAHIDEEN AND THIKR

Let us now examine the views of some of the Fuqaha in this regard. Imaam Shamsuddin Sarakhsi (rahmatullah alayh) states in his *Al-Mabsoot: "Ikhfa in dua is aula (best, of greater merit). Allah Ta'ala says (in this regard): 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently.", and Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'The best dua is khafi (silent), and the best rizq is that which suffices."*

Imaam Alaauddin Kaasaani (rahmatullah alayh) says in his *Badaaius Sanaai': "According to Abu Hanifah, raising the voice with takbeer is bid'ah fil asl (i.e. originally and primarily) because it is a Thikr, and the Sunnah in athkaar is silence by virtue of the statement of Allah Ta'ala: "Call unto your Rabb with humility and silently", and by the Hadith of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): "The best dua is silent (dua)." Thus, this (silence) is closest to humility and respect, and furthest from riya (show). Hence, this asl (primary principle) will not be abandoned except when there is a daleel-e-mukhassis (to justify diversion from the fundamental principle of Ikhfa'). For the practice (of reciting takbeer aloud) from the day of Arafah until Asr of the Day of Nahr there exists a daleel-e-mukhassis which is the Qur'aanic aayat. Amal on the Kitaab (i.e. practising according to the Qur'aanic command) is Waajib by Ijma', except in exceptions............. Thus amal on the zaahir text of the Qur'aan is Waajib when there is a doubt regarding the khusoos (i.e. the daleel which permits diversion from the fundamental*

principle)...........Therefore, amal on the general daleel (daleel-e-umoom – which is the aayat: 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and silence') will not be abandoned. It is thus apparent that ihtiyaat (the precautionary course) is to abandon (the act which hovers between Sunnat and Bid'ah) because abandonment of Sunnat is aula (better and more meritorious) than commission of Bid'ah."

Allaamah Kaasaani presented Imaam Abu Hanifah's view, daleel and rationale in the discussion on Takbeer Tashreeq. This rationale and Shar'i exposition are perfectly applicable to silent and audible dua/Thikr.

The following extracts from the kutub of the Fuqaha are being cited from *Ahsanul Fatawa:*
* "According to us (the Ahnaaf), the Mustahab in *Athkaar* is silence except in such acts which relate to proclamation, e.g. Athaan. Talbiyah, Khutbah. So is it stated in Al-Mabsoot."
* "It is stated in Al-Bahrur Raa-iq: 'Verily, *jahr* with takbeer is bid'ah at all times except on specific occasions (the Days of Tashreeq, etc.)."
* "Qaadhi Khaan has explicitly said is his Fataawa that *Thikr bil jahr* is Makrooh. In Fataawa Alaamiyah it is mentioned: 'The Sufiyah should be prevented from raising the voice and clapping. In Sharhut Tuhfah, Aini has explicitly mentioned it being haraam, and he has castigated what the claimants of Tasawwuf are doing in this regard........ The *Afdhal* method is *Ikhfa'*
* According to Imaam Maalik and his Ashaab all these acts (of *Thikr bil jahr*) are Makrooh because the Salf (Sahaabah and Taabieen) did not practise it, and to close

the avenue of bid'ah so that excess may not be committed in the Deen, and there be no transgressing beyond the confines of the clear Haqq. Verily in this era of ours, has happened what they (the Maaliki Fuaqaha) had feared and abstained from. –*Rasaa-il*
* It is explained in Al-Khulaasah: 'Difference of opinion in the recitation of Takbeer is devoid of substance. There is no prohibition in Thikrullaah at any time. The prohibition applies to the bid'ah method of its execution. Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) said that raising the voice with Thikr is bid'ah because it is in conflict with the command in the aayat: *'And, make the Thikr of Allah in your heart with humility and silently with a voice less than jahr.'* Hence, *jahr* will be restricted to occasions (commanded by the Shariah).
* Although this Hadith (one particular Hadith) establishes *Thikr bil jahr*, it is *ghair ma'mool* (not accepted for practical adoption) according to the Jamhoor Hanafi and Shaafi' Fuqaha, for verily, they have explicitly ruled that *jahr* with Thikr after Salaat is not Sunnat. On the contrary it (Sunnat) is *Sirr*. It is said in Nisaabul Ihtisaab: 'It is Makrooh to recite Takbeer audibly after Salaat, and verily it is bid'ah except during the days of Nahr and Tashreeq."……… Ibn Bittaal and others have said that the authorities of the Math-habs are unanimous in the ruling that raising the voice with Thikr is not Mustahab. Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh) has explained that that *jahr* was made for a short while, not permanently." –*Rasaa-il*

After presenting *all* narrations pertaining to *Thikr-e-Khafi* and *Thikr-e-Jahri* – narrations in favour of *Thikr-e-Khafi* and narrations which favour as well as oppose

Thikr-e-Jahri, Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad (rahmatullah alayh), the Author of Ahsanul Fataawa, states:

Undoubtedly, *Thikr-e-khafi* is *afdhal.* Imaam Maalik and other Fuqaha have restricted the *Jahr* narrations to the specific occasions of the Shariah. In other cases, *jahr* is **haraam.** According to the Fuqaha of the Ahnaaf, besides the specific occasions of the Shariah (when *jahr* is permissible), there are two views pertaining to *jahr:* permissible and haraam……..

In *athkaar* such as Tasbeeh and Tahleel, firstly, there is no need for congregation. Secondly, if occasionally such a gathering has occurred, then what is the need to sit in a 'halqah' (circle)? To interpret *nafs-e-ijtima'* (the mere act of congregating) as a 'circle' is neither intelligent nor is it stated in the dictionaries.

Most of the shurraah (commentators) of Hadith say that 'halq Thikr' has a general meaning. Within its scope are the gatherings of knowledge, the gatherings of Thikr, etc….

Generally, the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) did not participate in congregational Thikr. The Muhadditheen and Fuqaha who have mentioned the narrations pertaining to congregational Thikr, did not themselves establish (practically) gatherings of Thikr. In fact, they did not even participate in the Thikr sessions of the Sufiya. They (the Fuqaha) have attributed this practice to only the Sufiya.

For the permissibility of congregational Thikr, the requisite is abstention from bid'aat. Any bid'ah accretion will render the practice haraam. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had branded the group of people who had engaged in a specific form of the halqah

Thikr *jahran* as bid'atis, He reprimanded and expelled them from the Musjid.

Among the bid'aat pertaining to *Thikr jahr* are:

- To regard *jahr* to be *Mustahab Li-ainihi* (Mustahab *per se*).
- Without any *Awaaridh* (justifying factors) to believe that *Thikr-e-jahr* is superior to *Thikr-e-khafi.*
- To consider gatherings of Thikr to be Mustahab is bid'ah.
- To have an Imaam-Muqtadi relationship between the participants, i.e. one instructs the group to make Thikr , then the rest follow in unision.
- Any type of relationship between the thaakireen (i.e. they should not all together recite in rhythmic form and chorus).
- Making special arrangements to organize Thikr sessions.
- To accord the Thikr sessions the degree of *iltizaam* which is accorded to Faraaidh and Waajibaat, or to criticize one who refrains from it or to believe that he is abandoning a superior act………..*End of Ahsanul Fataawa's discourse.*

In his Musnad, Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) says that he saw in Musjidul Haraam a huge *halqah* (concourse/circle of people). It was a *Halqah of Ilm.* On investigating, he discovered that it was the *Halqah* of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Al-Haarith Zabeedi (radhiyallahu anhu), who was a Sahaabi. The term *halqah* in the context of the Hadith is not restricted to groups of people engaging in verbal Thikr. The Majaalis of Thikr

and the Halqah of Thikr mentioned in the Ahaadith refer to Ilmi gatherings as well. There is no *Qat'iyyat* (Absolute Certitude) for the claim that the Mujaalis and Halaqah necessarily refer to Thikr (i.e. specific verbal Thikr) sessions. It is a well-established fact that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not instruct congregational Thikr nor was it the practice of the Sahaabah to engage in such organized congregational Thikr sessions.

With all his flailing in the endeavour to produce 'proof' for the collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid, the venerable Mufti has not attempted to claim that such congregational sessions are Sunnah. The *certitude* there exists on the fact that such gatherings are not Sunnah has not permitted the venerable Mufti Sahib to venture such a claim.

The following are extracts from *Fataawa Mahmudiyyah* whose author is Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi (rahmatullah alayh) who happens to be the Shaikh of the honourable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib:

(1) ***Question:*** In the majlis of wa'z (lecture), during occasional pauses, the audience, making a noise (i.e. loudly) recite Durood Shareef. Also after Isha and other Namaaz, the musallis noisily recite Durood Shareef. Is this permissible according to the Shariah?

Answer: Durood Shareef is a dua, and in dua, ***Ikhfa is preferable and afdhal***. The noisy method described in the question is not established in the Shariah. In fact it is baseless and bid'ah.

Should any over-zealous supporter of loud collective Thikr attempt to argue that Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan (rahmatullah alayh) described the specific method

of noisy recital as baseless and bid'ah, and that he did not label loud collective Thikr as bid'ah, then the response to this argument is: The specific method branded bid'ah should not be utilized as a subterfuge and diversion for our actual claim and for the clear and explicit answer given by Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan. The dispute with the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib is the question of superiority of Thikr: Is *Thikr-e-Khafi* superior or *Thikr-e-Jahri*? While it is our contention that *Thikr-e-Khafi* is Mustahab and *afdhal*, the venerable Mufti Sahib has perspired profusely in the redundant exercise to prove that *Thikr-e-Jahr* is Mustahab and *afdhal*. In response to this baseless theory of the venerable Mufti Sahib, Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan unambiguously states: *"In Dua the* ***matloob is Ikhfa which is preferable and afdhal****."*

(Fataawa Mahmudiyyah, Vol. 6)

(2) ***Question:*** How is it during Fajr, after the dua, to stand up, form a halqah (circle) and recite, *Ya Nabi Salaam alaika',* or after the dua to read the Fadhaail?

Answer: "This method of Durood Shareef is not established from the Qur'aan-e-Kareem, the Hadith Shareef, the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam, the Muhadditheen and the other Salf-e-Salihhen. Every person or whoever has the taufeeq, should sit in his position and recite. This will be something of fortune, goodness and barkat. Standing and forming a halqah and reciting in this manner is more ostentatious. Allah Ta'ala loves ikhlaas and accepts it. Ostentatious acts are not loved (by Allah Ta'ala) and are not accepted. After Fajr Namaaz when all the people have completed (their ibaadat), then to read the fadhaail and

masaail of the Deen and to teach is excellent and beneficial." (Fataawa Mahmudiyya, Vol 15)

The *halqah* method in public as a regular practice is ostentatious and bid'ah even if the correct Durood formula is recited. The innovated method is the target of criticism and prohibited.

(3) ***Question:*** There is a practice of reciting Durood Shareef *jahran* after Jumuah Namaaz and also in other neighbourhoods this practice is observed. Durood Shareef, Tasbeeh, Tahleel and Takbeer are recited in *Ijtimaai* (congregational) form, *jahran* (audibly). One Faadhil (Aalim) of Deoband explained to me that according to Shaami this practice is not bid'at. This person (the Deobandi Molvi) said by way of objection (i.e. objecting to the claim that it is bid'ah) that the Thikr which Naazim Saahib makes in Mazaahirul Uloom after Asr is a form and a time which he has himself fixed. Why is that not bid'ah? He also says that it has been the practice of the buzrugs of the recent past and now of their khulafa to gather their mureedeen in the Musjid to make *Thikr-e-jali* (audible Thikr). They instruct and exhort their mureedeen to do this. How is this?

(NB This is exactly the methodology of the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib's argumentation. He has argued in similar style in support of loud collective Thikr in the Musaajid.)

Answering this question, Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi (rahmatullah alayh) states in his Fataawa:

"Durood Shareef in both ways – sirran and jahran – is permissible and a medium of spiritual progress and divine proximity. Reciting it (Durood Shareef) on Friday is specifically emphasised. But, to recite it ***jahran in Ijtimaai'*** form (loud collective form) is not substantiated by the Hadith and Fiqh. The Sahaabah Kiraam would congregate five times a day in the Musjid. Besides the Salaat times, they found abundant opportunities to congregate in both *safar* (journey) and *hadhr* (i.e. not on a journey). But, nowhere is it proven that it was their *ma'mool* (practice) to recite ***ijtimaa-an jahran*** (collectively and loudly).

Even if one recites *infiraadan* (alone), then too when reciting audibly, it is necessary to refrain from disturbing anyone. For example, someone may be engaging in performing Salaat or he may be sleeping. Furthermore, there should be no (worldly or nafsaani) motive for reciting audibly. The motive should also not be riya and aggrandizement. The greatest ibaadat is unacceptable if the niyyat is corrupt...........

If in some place there is a practice to recite a fixed number at specicic times, then that will be the *amal of the Mashaaikh*. It will not be *Hujjat-e-Shar'iyyah* (Proof of the Shariah). Following it is not incumbent. However, since the Mashaaikh were followers of the Shariah, their practice should be appropriately interpreted to avoid it being in conflict with the Shariah and within the confines of bid'ah. The interpretation for this is: ....

A doctor prescribes a fixed amount of medicine to be taken at fixed times by a patient. This is not a command of ibaadat. It is a remedy based on the experience of the practitioner. Anyone who does not follow this, is not

sinful by Allah Ta'ala. If he follows the guidance of the practitioner, he will, Insha'Allah, be cured. The special form of Thikr in which there is a fixed amount and a specific form of *dharb* (striking head movements) is of this category. With changing conditions (of mureedeen), the form of this Thikr too changes. Sometimes, this *jahr and dharb* are completely abandoned. The condition of specific forms of *khatam* is the same." (Fataawa Mahmudiyyah, Vol.15)

The salient aspects in this Fatwa, which should be digested and not overlooked are:

- The *Ijtimaai'* (congregational) form was not the practice of the Sahaabah.
- The *Jahri* method was not the *ma'mool* of the Sahaabah.
- The loud method of the Mashaaikh is a remedy for the mureeds.
- This practice of the Mashaaikh is not a *Hujjat* (Proof) *of the Shariah.*

The maximum leverage for loud Thikr which the venerable Mufti Saheb could cadge from the Fatwa of Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan (rahmatullah alayh) is the permissibility of reciting Thikr *Ifraadan* (alone/individually) with moderate audibility on condition no one is inconvenienced and disturbed.

Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan (rahmatullah alayh) was fully aware of the *ma'mulaat* of our Chishti Mashaaikh. He was not in the dark regarding the Thikr practices conducted in the khaanqas and the khaanqah Musaajid. Nevertheless, his Fatwa is presented with clarity. The *ma'mulaat* of the Mashaaikh of the Khaanqas

dare not be presented in conflict with the rulings of the Fuqaha.

Hadhrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan says in his Fataawa: *"Insistence on Mandoob delivers it (the Mandoob) to the confines of Karaahat." (Volume 1)* When there is *israar* (insistence) and *iltizaam* (to make incumbent) on even a Mustahab act, then such act becomes bid'ah notwithstanding its origin in the Sunnah.

AHAADITH AUTHENTICATED BY THE FUQAHA – TALAQQI BIL QUBOOL

We are convinced that the venerable Mufti Sahib is surely aware of the fact that when the illustrious Fuqaha-e-Kiraam cite a Hadith as a *Mustadal* or adduce it in corroboration of the view they expound, then the very citation of the Hadith is the daleel for its *saht* (authenticity) regardless of any classification of the later Muhadditheen. This is a well-known principle of which the honourable Mufti Sahib is not unaware.

In view of the likely confusion which the venerable Mufti Sahib's assault on the two Ahaadith may create in the minds of the unwary readers, there is a need to expand somewhat on this subject.

Mustadal (plural *mustadallaat)* is the basis on which the Fuqaha formulate a Shar'i *hukm.* Qur'aanic verses, Ahaadith, statements and rulings of the Sahaabah and the principles of Shar'i Qiyaas form the *Mustadallaat* of the Fuqaha. The Fuqaha do not operate beyond the confines of these Qur'aanic principles. Shaikh Yusuf Bin Ismaaeel An-Nibhaani says in his *Hujjatullaah Alal Aalameen:*

"Whoever says that Sunnat is only what is explicitly mentioned in the Ahaadith, has in fact rejected all the Math-habs of the Mujtahideen. He has rejected Ijma'. The evil of his belief is not hidden. We seek protection from Allah Ta'ala (against such deviation). It is mentioned in Al-Yaaqoot wal Jawaahir, and similarly it is narrated in Al-Mizaanul Khadriyyah (of Imaam Sha'raani) that Shaikhul Islam Zakariyya (among the Shaafi' Fuqaha) said: 'Alhamdulillaah, I have searched

for the proofs of the Mujtahideen (i.e. for their dalaa-il and mustadallaat). I have not found even a single fara' (a mas'alah which is not a principle) from among the Furoo' of their Mathaahib except that it is substantiated by a daleel, either an Aayat from the Qur'aan or a Hadith or an Athar (statement of a Sahaabi) or Saheeh Qiyaas – based on saheeh principles. ….All their statements are derived from the rays of the Noor of the Shariah which is the foundation. It is impossible to find a fara' (of the Fuqaha) without a basis (in the Qur'aan and Sunnah)."

It should be clear to men of knowledge that when a Muhaddith of the later eras describing a Hadith says: *"I do not recognize it.", "I do not know it.", "There is no basis for it."; "It is weak."; etc.*, he says so within the limits of his knowledge and investigation based on principles which he or other Muhadditheen have evolved. He never directs such comments against the *Mustdallaat* of the Fuqaha who were the Asaatizah of the Asaatizah of the Muhadditheen.

On the contrary, it was the practice of the Muhadditheen to set aside their own Saheeh Ahaadith, if there was a conflict with the practice (amal) and ruling of the Fuqaha. Thus, they would say: *"The amal of the Ahl-e-Ilm is on this….", and they would say this even if they had classified the Ahaadith as weak (Dhaeef).* Despite the Hadith being *Dhaeef* according to their classification, the Muhadditheen would mention the *amal* of the Fuqaha.

Thus the Muhadditheen who had compiled the Hadith books, would practise in accordance with the Ahaadith which they themselves had classified as *Dhaeef* because these '*Dhaeef*' narrations constituted the *Mustadallaat* of the Fuqaha. The principles and rules of Hadith

classification which the later Muhadditheen had formulated did not apply to the Shariah's laws or to the Hadith *mustadallaat* of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen.

The Muhadditheen were not among the Aimmah Mujtahideen. They followed the Math-habs in their practical life. They did not formulate a different Math-hab for themselves based on their classification of Hadith.

It is surprising that the venerable Mufti Sahib being an Ustaadh of Hadith is either unaware of or have forgotten about the principle of *Talaqqi Bil Qubool.* In terms of this well-known principle a Hadith becomes valid for *amal* even if its *isnaad* is *dhaeef.* In this regard, Hafiz Ibn Hajar writes:

"One of the criteria for acceptance of Hadith is the concurrence of the Ulama on making amal (acting) on the Hadith. Such a Hadith (on which there is the concurrence of the Fuqaha) will be incumbently accepted."

In his *Al-Ajwibatul Faadhilah,* Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy, explaining the principle of *Talaqqi Bil Qubool*, says:

"Similarly (will a Hadith be accepted) when the Ummah accepts a *Dhaeef* Hadith. (Ummah in this context does not include the rank and file). According to the authentic view such a Hadith will be acted on. Allaamah Muhadddith Faqeeh Shaikh Husain Bin Muhsin Al-Ansaari Al-Yamaani was asked about the statement of Imaam Tirmizi who says in his Jaami' when he narrates a *Dhaeef* Hadith: "Amal (practical adoption) on it is according to the Ahl-e-Ilm (the Fuqaha)." ....And it was also asked about the established principle on which there is the consensus of the Muhadditheen that anything

other than a Saheeh or Hasan Hadith will not be accepted in the matter of (formulating) *ahkaam*. But this Hadith (referring to a particular Hadith) is *Dhaeef*. How is it then permissible for the Ulama to act on it?

The Shaikh said in response: "May Allah grant us and you taufeeq. A *Dhaeef* Hadith is one which lacks a condition from among the conditions of acceptance.....As-Suyuti said in Sharh Nazmid Durar (Al-Nahrul lazi Zakhar): Qubool (Acceptance) is:

(1) What the Ulama have accorded *Talaqqi bil Qubool* (i.e. the Fuqaha have accepted a narration even though there is no *saheeh isnaad* for it. Among the group of Ulama who have narrated this is Ibn Abdul Barr.
(2) Or it (the narration) has become well-known to the Aimmah-e-Hadith. And As-Suyuti has also said after mentioning the Hadith: 'Tirmizi said: 'Amal today is on this Hadith according to the Ulama.' With this statement he indicated that a Hadith is strengthened with the acceptance by the Fuqaha."

Many authorities have explicitly said that of the evidence for the authenticity of a Hadith is the acceptance by the Ulama even if there is no reliable *isnaad* for it. As-Suyuti has also said in Tadreebur Raawi: "Some of them (the Authorities) said: 'Hadith will be accorded authenticity when the People (i.e. the Fuqaha) have accepted it as authentic even if there is no *saheeh isnaad* for it." Ibn Abdul Barr said in Al-Istithkaar when it was narrated from Tirmizi that Bukhaari authenticated the Hadith of the Ocean (that its water is pure), while the

Muhadditheen do not accredit this type of *isnaad*. Nevertheless according to me the Hadith is Saheeh because the Ulama have accorded it acceptance."

It is mentioned in At-Tamheed: 'Jaabir narrated from Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): 'A dinaar is twenty four qeeraat.' About this Hadith, he said: 'In terms of the statement of the Ulama and their Ijma' regarding its meaning, it is independent of *isnaad* (i.e. it is authentic without an isnaad).

Regarding the practice of *Talqeen* to the mayyit (according to the Hambali Math-hab). "A *Dhaeef* Hadith is narrated on this issue. At-Tabraani records in his Mu'jam the Hadith of Abu Umaamah.. …..This Hadith is not substantiated. However, the continuity of practice in this regard in all the lands and ages without any rejection suffices for its practical adoption."

The Hanafi Muhaqqiq, Imaam Al-Kamaal Al-Humaam, says in Fathul Qadeer (about the weakness of a Hadith): "Among the factors which authenticate Hadith is the concurrence of the Ulama on its practice."

Tirmizi said after narrating it: *'Hadithun Ghareebun'. (This Hadith is Ghareeb). But, notwithstanding this, the amal is on it according to the Ulama among the Sahaabah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and others besides them (i.e. the Taabieen, etc.)'.*

Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) said: "The fame of a Hadith in Madinah makes it independent of a *saheeh sanad*. Haafiz As-Sakhaawi says in Fathul Mugeeth: 'When the Ummah accepts a *Dhaeef* Hadith, then according to the authentic view it will be adopted (for amal). So much so, that it will attain the status of Mutawaatir, and it will abrogate *Maqtoo'* (Ahaadith). It is

for this reason that Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh) said about (the particular) Hadith: "There is no bequest for an heir", verily, the Muhadditheen have not substantiated it (i.e. it is not authentic in terms of their criteria). Nevertheless, the Ummah has accorded it acceptance for practical adoption. In fact, they (the Fuqaha) have affirmed it to be Naasikh (i.e. it is an abrogater) for the Qur'aanic aayat regarding wasiyyat (bequest)."

Allaamah Saalih Bin Mahdi Al-Muqbeeli said: "Saheeh Hadith in the specific meaning of the Muta-akh-khireen (the later Muhadditheen from about the age of Bukhaari and Muslim), is that which has been narrated by an uprighteous Haafiz who inturn narrates from a similar narrator without a defect. Saheeh Hadith in the general meaning according to the Mutaqaddimeen (the authorities of the early era) among the Muhadditheen, all the Fuqaha and Usooliyyeen, is a narration on which there is practical adoption *(ma'mool bihi)."* Thus, when a Muhaddith among the Muta-akh-khireen says: 'This Hadith is not Saheeh.', then while it negates the special and restricted meaning of the term, it does not negate the general meaning of authenticity according to the Mutaqaddimeen, all the Fuqaha and Usooliyyeen. Therefore, at this juncture there is the possibility of a Hadith being of the *Hasan* or *Dhaeef* or *Ghair Ma'mool* category. On account of this possibility, it is incumbent to probe the Hadith. If it is established that it is *Hasan or Dhaeef Ma'mool bihi* (i.e. it has been practically adopted by the Fuqaha), then it will be accepted. And, if it is *Dhaeef Ghair Ma'mool bihi* (i.e. it has not been adopted for *amal* by the Fuqaha), then it will not be accepted."

(*End of Maulana Abdul Hayy's dissertation.*)

It is clear that the classified Hadith categories of the later Muhadditheen do not apply to the narrations accepted and adopted by the Fuqaha who went before them. It should be simple to understand that after the demise of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), Islam did not disappear as Judaism and Christianity had disappeared with the departure of their respective Nabis. Not a single mas'alah of the Shariah was lost after the demise of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

When the Muhadditheen appeared on the scene two centuries later, they found Islam intact. They followed the Islam into which they were born, and they continued practising the Ahkaam without interpolation, deletion and alteration in the light of their classification of Hadith. The masaa-il of the Shariah which the Sahaabah and their illustrious Students, the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen had evolved, were *all* based on the Qur'aan and Sunnah which did not disappear. The Mujtahid Imaams were Muhadditheen of the highest calibre. Only when a Hadith was Saheeh and beyond reproach, would it constitute a valid *Mustadal* for extrapolation of *ahkaam.* In the circles of Ilm it is common knowledge that acceptance of a Hadith as a *Mustadal* by the Fuqaha is the *daleel* for the authenticity of that Hadith.

Any unbiased person with a little understanding will readily understand that principles formulated two centuries after the age of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen cannot negate the authenticity of the narrations accredited by these illustrious Fuqaha, who flourished in the age of the Sahaabah and in close proximity to their era.

Maulana Abdul Hayy further says: "Shaikh Ibraaheem Ath-Thabrahaiti Maaliki says in Sharhul Arbaeen An-Nawwiyah: 'The occasion for not adopting Dhaeef Hadith in matters of Ahkaam, is when the Fuqaha have not accepted it. If they have accepted it, then it is confirmed, and it (the Dhaeef narration) becomes a proof which shall be practically adopted in matters of ahkaam, etc. as Imaam Shaafi' has said..... *(This effectively debunks Mufti Radhaaul Haq's claim that the relevant Ahaadith cited by the Fuqaha are 'Weak". They are NOT 'weak'. They are solid GOLD.)*

Haafiz Ibn Hajar says in Fathul Baari: "None of the *isnaad* (of narrations) is devoid of some criticism. But on the whole the Hadith has a basis. In fact, Ash-Shaafi' has explicitly stated in Al-Umm that the text of this (Dhaeef) Hadith is *Mutawaatir*...."........

(Haafiz Bin Hajar commenting on a certain Hadith said): 'Bukhaari said: "It is not Saheeh." The Compilers of the Four Sunan narrated it, and Haakim narrated it from the *tareeq* of Eesa Bin Yoonus. Tirmizi said: 'It is Ghareeb.' We do not recognize it except from the narration of Eesa Bin Yoonus from Hishaam. I (i.e. Imaam Tirmizi) asked Muhammad (i.e. Imaam Bukhaari) about it. He said: ''I do not regard it to be secure (i.e. its sanad).' Ibn Maajah and Haakim have narrated it from the avenue of Hafs Bin Ghiyaath, and also from Hishaam. Tirmizi said: 'It has been narrated in different ways from Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu). Its *isnaad* is *not saheeh.*' (However, inspite of all this criticism), the *amal* of the Ulama is on it. (i.e. they have adopted it and the Ummah is practising accordingly)."

(Be it known that the Shariah as we have it today, was transmitted down the long corridor of more than 14 centuries from the Sahaabah. The Shariah did not reach us from Imaam Bukhaari or from any of the other Muhadditheen who appeared centuries after the Sahaabah. Thus the amal of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen override the Hadith classifications of the Muhadditheen. Even if a Hadith is labelled 'weak' by the later Muhadditheen, it has absolutely no effect on a Shar'i hukm which was already Mutawaatir during the age of the Sahaabah and Taabieen.)

Our Ustaadh, Allaamah Shaikh Muhammad Badr-e-Aalam said in the Ta'leeq (Annotation) on the discussion of Imaamul Asr: "I say: …..Verily, the Shaikh does not intend with the aforegoing discussion the abolition of the application of *Isnaad*. How is this possible? If it was not for *Isnaad*, anyone would have said whatever he desired. On the contrary, the Shaikh intends to convey that when a Hadith has become authentic by way of indications and it has become obvious, then to discard it merely on the basis of a *weak narrator is not correct.* How can this be so when continuity of practical adoption of it is a stronger testification for its substantiation according to him?"

And, Shaikh Muhammad Yusuf Binnuri said: "Verily, Shaikh Anwar (Hadhrat Anwar Shah Kasmiri) would say: 'The purpose of *Isnaad* is to ensure that something which is not Deen does not creep into the Deen. The purpose of *Isnaad* is not to expunge from the Deen what has been substantiated of it by the practice (amal) of the Ahl-e-Isnaad (the Ulama whose Isnaad links up with Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam)' " – *End of Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Hayy's dissertation*

Wakee' Bin Jarraah, the renowned Muhadddith and expert in the field of examining narrators said: *"A Hadith which is in circulation among the Fuqaha is better than a Hadith in circulation among the Shuyookh of Hadith."*

In Shaami it is said: *"When the Mujtahid employs a Hadith as a basis for formulation (of masaail), then (his istidlaal with it) is the accredition of that Hadith."*

In Imdaadul Fataawa, it is mentioned: *"Is the consensus of the Jamhoor not a sign for the Hadith having a strong basis even if the factor of* dhu'f (weakness) *has become attached to it by way of the sanad?"*

In I'laaus Sunan, it is mentioned: *"The fame (shuhrat) of a mas'alah liberates us from (the need) of probing the asaaneed."*

Ainul Hidaayah states: *"Imaam Shaafi' has written in his Risaalah that the Taabieen Ulama had accepted it (referring to a particular Hadith with no proven isnaad) in view of the fact that it was confirmed to them that it was the instruction of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Ibn Abdul Barr said that this instruction (referring to the Hadith in question) is well-known to the Ulama of history and the Fuqaha, hence due to the resemblance with Mutawaatir, there is no need for its isnaad."*

Providing further insight on this issue, Allaamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri explains in Fathul Baari:

"The Muhadditheen (i.e. the later Hadith compilers) take into consideration only the state of the isnaad. They do not consider Ta-aamul (uninterrupted practice from generation to generation initiating from the age of the

Sahaabah). Hence, many a time a Hadith is authentic on the basis of their criteria. However, they find that there is no amal on that Saheeh Hadith. This bewilders them. In this regard, Tirmizi narrated in his Jaami' two authentic narrations, valid for practical adoption. Then he commented: 'Verily, no one has adopted it for amal. Inspite of the authenticity of the Isnaad no one is making amal on it.

In the same way the Muhadditheen have classified as Dhaeef a Hadith from the angle of its Isnaad although the Hadith is widely practised on it. (By the Ummah) during their time. (i.e. it was ma'mool bihi). Thus there is a disadvantage from a different angle. It is therefore imperative to consider Ta-aamul along with the isnaad, for verily, the Shariah revolves around Ta-aamul and Tawaaruth." (i.e. the permanent practice from the time of the Sahaabah.)

The acceptance and citation of the two Hadith narrations by all the Mufassireen and the Fuqaha confer to these Ahaadith the lofty pedestal of authenticity. These Hadith narrations meet the requirements of the principle of *Talaqqi bil Qubool* par excellence, hence any derogatory epithet attributed to these narration by anyone has to be dismissed as baseless. The aforegoing explanations of the Fuqaha and Ulama demonstrate conspicuously the authenticity of the two narrations which the venerable Mufti Sahib has assaulted in an attempt to produce substance for the bid'ah of loud collective Thikr in the Musaajid. It is indeed academically bizarre for the venerable Mufti Sahib who happens to be an Ustaadh of Hadith to assail the authenticity of Ahaadith which have been accredited by

all the Fuqaha and all the Mufassireen. When Fuqaha of the calibre of Imaam Sarakhsi and Allaamah Kaasaani unhesitatingly produce these narrations as confirmatory testimony for the *afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr-e-Khafi,* then it is a demonstration of lamentable unawareness of the principles of Hadith to assail such narrations with the comments/classification of the later Muhadditheen in an abortive bid to dislodge the Ahaadith from their lofty pedestal of authenticity accorded to them by *Ta-aamul* and *Talaqqi bil Qubool* of the Fuqaha.

Another important fact which the venerable Mufti Sahib has overlooked is that these two Hadith narrations which he has attempted to dislodge and neutralize have been presented by the Mufassireen and Fuqaha in a corroboratory capacity. They are not cited as the primary basis – the actual mustadal – for the superiority of silent Thikr. The primary *Mustadal* for the view of the superiority of silent Thikr is the Qur'aanic verses and the Sunnah of the Sahaabah and the Salf-e-Saaliheen. The various Ahaadith serve to corroborate and strengthen the position of superiority of silent Thikr. But the actual *Hukm* is not reliant on these two narrations. Excise these narrations from the argument, and the *hukm* remains the same. Silent Thikr will remain superior on the basis of the Qur'aanic verses and the permanent practice of the Sahaabah. And, as far as we Muqallideen are concerned, the unanimous ruling of the Fuqaha suffices.

In the preceding pages we have shown the views of the Fuqaha and Mufassireen who claim consensus on the superiority of silent Thikr. Those who have presented some different views are not in conflict with this Consensus. Their views are applicable to different

situations and circumstances. For example, the Chishti Mashaaikh, despite subscribing to the superiority of silent Thikr and believing it to be the *Asal Hukm*, instruct their mureedeen to practise *Thikr bil jahr*. Circumstances and attitudes dictate such temporary departures from the unanimous view of the *afdhaliyyat* of silent Thikr. No one besides the venerable Mufti Sahib, who has ventured different views on the basis of changing circumstances, reject the unanimous view of *afdhaliyyat of Thikr-e-khafi*.

Since the venerable Mufti Sahib has an agenda to fulfil, he felt constrained to promote and elevate the status of loud Thikr and demote silent Thikr. The agenda of the loud collective Thikr programmes in the Musjid is the guiding and determining factor in the hypothesis of the venerable Mufti Sahib, hence he has failed to discern his conflict with the Sahaabah, Fuqaha and Mufassireen on this issue.

The acceptance of these narrations by the Fuqaha and Mufassireen does not really warrant presentation of further evidence for the *saht* (authenticity) of the narrations. Nevertheless, since the venerable Mufti Sahib has assaulted the authenticity of these authentic narrations on the basis of the views expressed by some Muhadditheen, it will be appropriate to dilate more on his claim.

In his bid to demote the Hadith narrations from their pedestal of authenticity, the venerable Mufti Sahib averred: *"Firstly both Ahaadeeth mentioned are weak narrations as they have been narrated by weak narrators. This is according to Imaam Baihqi, Imaam Daaraqutni Imaam Zahabi, Hafiz Ibn Hajar and others."*

We believe that the venerable Mufti Sahib has added this caveat as an escape valve. In the event of criticism, he could argue that he did not claim that the charge of 'weakness' was unanimous. Let it be understood that the Muhaddithen also have their 'math-habs' in the science of Hadith classification. Different Muhadditheen have their own criteria. A Hadith which is *dhaeef* to one Muhaddith, may be *saheeh* according to another one. There is considerable difference of opinion on this issue. While some Muhadditheen have labelled these narrations *dhaeef*, others have described them as *Saheeh*.

Imaam Jalaluddin Suyuti in Jaamius Sagheer narrating the Hadith: *"The best Thikr is khafi."*, from the Musnad of Imaam Ahmad, The Saheeh of Ibn Hibbaan and Baihqi in Shu'bul Imaaan, says that this Hadith is Saheeh.

Ibn Hibbaan classifies this narration *Saheeh* in his Saheeh. The narrator who narrates from Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas (radhiyallahu anhu) is stated in this Hadith as 'Muhammad Bin Abdur Rahmaan Bin Abi Kabshah.

Commenting on the Raawi (narrator), Muhammad Bin Abdur Rahmaan Bin Labeenah, it is mentioned in *Majmauz Zawaaid:*

"Ibn Hibbaan has accredited him and said that he has narrated from Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas. However, Ibn Maeen has affirmed weakness for him. The remaining narrators are all Saheeh."

In Al-Maqaasidul Hasanah it is mentioned: 'Ibn Hibbaan and Abu Awaanah have authenticated this Hadith (i.e. declared it Saheeh)." By this Chain, this Hadith is Marfoo'.

In Ilal Hadith, Abu Zur'ah said the narrator Ibn Abi Labeebah is 'Most Reliable' *(Asahh)*

Imaam Suyuti narrated this Hadith in Al-Baduris Saafirah from Abu Ya'la Musali from Aishah (radhiyallahu anha). He commented that in this Hadith is *Hujjat (Proof)* "for our Naqshabandi Mashaaikh" whose Math-hab is *Thikr-e-Khafi*.

Both these Hadith have been narrated by numerous authorities. The *shuhrat* (fame) of these narrations "liberates us from the need to investigate the isnaad" as is stated in *I'laaus Sunan."* The very *shuhrat* of these Ahaadith which the venerable Mufti Sahib endeavoured to dismiss with his unfounded and unjustified assault, testifies for their authenticity notwithstanding the *ilal* (technical defects) which some of the *Muta-akhir* Muhadditheen predicate to the *Isnaad.*

It is a principle of the science of Hadith that the cumulative effect of a variety of narrations of similar subject matter, but of variant versions in their respective *Isnaad*, eliminates the *dhu'f* (technical weakness), and elevates the Hadith to a status of acceptable authenticity. These two Ahaadith faulted by the venerable Mufti Sahib are too well-known. They are recorded in numerous kutub of Fiqh, Tafseer and Hadith. Authorities of all branches of Shar'i Knowledge, present these narrations in their arguments to establish the superiority of silent Thikr.

Added to this, is the acceptance of these narrations by the illustrious Fuqaha. This acceptance *(Talaqqi bil Qubool)* is the strongest evidence for the authenticity of these Ahaadith. The fact that the Fuqaha present these Ahaadith as *Mustadallaat* or as corroboration, testifies that their authenticity stems from the era of the Sahaabah. The immediate Asaatizah of the first wrung of Aimmah-e-

Mujtahideen in the Taabieen era. These Aimmah passed on their Knowledge to their successors who are the Leaders of the Math-habs, and from them this knowledge pervaded the successive ranks of Fuqaha. These Fuqaha did not glean these Ahaadith or their Ilm in general from kutub. Thus, this Knowledge of Islam which we have in our kutub of Fiqh in front of us is not secondary and tertiary acquired from book-study. It is the Ilm of Wahi which reached us via the noble Links in an unbroken Golden Chain (Isnaad) which links up with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

In ascertaining the *saht* (authenticity) of Ahaadith which constitute the *Mustadallaat* of the *Ahkaam of Fiqh*, we are totally independent of the Hadith Books of Imaam Bukhaari, Imaam, Muslim, etc., etc. The presentation of a Hadith by the Fuqaha is the strongest proof of its authenticity. In the face of the accredition of the Fuqaha, the conflicting classification of the Muhadditheen is devoid of substance in the context of the *Ahkaam* already formulated and finalized during the Khairul Quroon epoch.

In view of the clarity of the exposition of the principle of *Talaqqi bil Qubool* by the Authorities of the Shariah, the negation of the authenticity of the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) by the 9th century Suyuti is lamentably surprising and untenable. In the face of the thrust of this Principle, Suyuti's view is baseless. *All* attempts made by some Ulama of the later ages to assail the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) are devoid of Shar'i substances. Their personal opinions have to be set aside as fallacious. The *only* motive underlying these abortive attempts to dislodge the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is to extract support for collective loud Thikr performances in the public. The Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen had no such

agenda. They stated the unadulterated Haqq to safeguard the pristine purity of the Sunnah.

In his abortive attempt to scuttle the two authentic Ahaadith, the honourable Mufti Sahib acquitted himself dishonourably by ignoring the principles of Fiqh as well as the principles of Hadith. He summarily dismissed the narrations without according intelligent consideration to the consequences of his lamentable utterance to defame the famous Ahaadith which enjoy the highest degree of authenticity. We are dealing with a *Hukm* of the Shariah which was concluded by the illustrious Fuqaha long, long before the age of the Muhadditheen. There is, therefore, no need to refer to the later Muhadditheen for ascertainment of the status of a Hadith which the Fuqaha had authenticated by utilizing it as their *Mustadal* or for corroborating a fatwa which they had issued. In short, these Ahaadith which the venerable Mufti Sahib has assailed, are **GOLD.**

SUMMARY

The salient features for the authenticity of these two Hadith narrations which confirm the superiority of silent Thikr are:

- The *Jamhoor* Mufassireen of the Qur'aan, all cite these narrations to corroborate the Qur'aanic command of silent Thikr. They further cite these Ahaadith without assailing their *Isnaad.*
- Numerous kutub of Hadith record these two narrations as well as many Ahaadith of similar or identical purport.
- The accumulative effect of the variety of narrations of the same subject matter eliminate the

‘weakness’ which some Muhadditheen have assigned to the *Isnaad*.

- There is no consenus among the later Muhadditheen on the *dhu’f* (weakness) of these Ahaadith. According to some Muhadditheen, these narrations are *Saheeh*.
- The clinching evidence for the authenticity of these two Ahaadith are the illustrious Fuqaha who cite these narrations in substantiation of *Ahkaam* of the Shariah.
- The actual *hukm* of the *afdhaliyyat* (superiority) of silent Thikr is not based on these narrations. The primary *Mustadal* of the Fuqaha are the two Qur’aanic verses which command silent Thikr.

Thus the honourable Mufti Sahib’s claim of ‘weakness’ is lamentably weak and devoid of substance. We, therefore, dismiss his contention as utterly baseless and not worthy of a Man of Ilm.

Reconciliation is of no effect

The venerable Mufti Sahib says: *“The two types of Ahaadeeth can be conformed to in the following way: silent zikr is permissible, however at times due to circumstances and conditions loud zikr is more preferable.”*

This is another specimen of the venerable Mufti’s confusion. He has not demarcated the subject of the dispute, hence his arguments vacillate in a state of confusion. The claim which the Mufti Sahib has tendered is *the afdhaliyyat of Thikr-e-jahr.* We contend that it is grossly erroneous. The Shariah states with great clarity

that *Thikr-e-Khafi* is *afdhal*, and on this *afdhaliyyat* there exists *Ijma'*. The argument of 'circumstances' is applicable in special cases, e.g. the Mashaaikh of Chisht prescribe *Thikr-e-jahr* for beginners in the Path. But, a departure from the original *Hukm* due to some expediency, should not be interpreted as an abrogation or cancellation of the original ruling of the Shariah. The original ruling remains extant and may not be tampered with.

However, due to circumstances another permissible method is adopted temporarily to satisfy the need. But this adoption does not demote the original *hukm* from its pedestal of *afdhaliyyat* nor does it elevate the permissible method of the lesser degree to the status of *afdhaliyyat.*

It is manifestly erroneous to portray silent Thikr as 'permissible' and loud Thikr as 'preferred' as being the original ruling of the Shariah. The opposite is the true position. While silent Thikr is based on Qur'aanic commands and numerous explicit Ahaadith, there is no verse of the Qur'aan which commands or even extols loud Thikr. Likewise with the Ahaadith. There is no Hadith which explicitly states the superiority of loud Thikr. On the contrary, the Ahaadith in general deprecate and derogate loud Thikr. The permissibility of moderate *Thikr bil jahr* is derived by deduction and inference. In addition, the pendulum of rulings for loud Thikr vault wildly from one extreme to the other – from haraam to permissible, with the in between categories of Makrooh and Bid'ah. There are no such discrepancies and incongruencies related to *Thikr-e-Khafi*.

This argument of the venerable Mufti Sahib is also baseless.

The Argument of Benefits

The venerable Mufti Sahib continuing his endeavour to substantiate his erroneous theory, avers: *"Allamah Munaawi (Rahmatullah alaih) has stated in his kitab Faidhul Qadeer that apart from those times in which loud zikr would disturb others or when one's intentions are not sincere, then loud zikr would be more virtuous than silent zikr. This is so because more benefits result from loud zikr."* Then he enumerates seven benefits.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has failed to understand that *Mansoos Ahkaam* are not subject for change on account of benefits perceived by mortals. The superiority of silent Thikr is a *Mansoos Alayh* practice on which there exists *Ijma'*. Regardless of the benefits of another practice, the *Mansoos* silent Thikr practice may not be tampered with. The minimum classification of silent Thikr is *Istihbaab*, while many authorities claim it to be Waajib and loud Thikr to be bid'ah and haraam.

The benefits even if 100% confirmed, lack Shar'i legality and force for displacing the *hukm* commanded by the Qur'aan and confirmed by the Sunnah. Although the benefits are acknowledged, the Fuqaha and Jamhoor Mufassireen maintain the superiority of *Thikr-e-Khafi*. If benefits and other rationale have to be accepted as valid grounds for effecting change to Shar'i commands, the entire Shariah will disappear as a consequence of the distortion and displacement enacted on the basis of interpretation.

The Masnoon practice is to perform Salaat with eyes open. Keeping the eyes closed during Salaat has no orgin in the Sunnah. However, there are benefits in closing the eyes during Salaat. Significant benefits are achieved in

concentration and the ability to ward off stray thoughts. If the Masnoon practice of open eyes is displaced by closed eyes, it will be unacceptable. It will be bid'ah. Closed eyes displace the Sunnah practice of performing Salaat with open eyes. It will therefore be bid'ah to perform Salaat with the eyes closed.

However, if due to an abundance of stray thoughts, the musalli becomes restless and is just not able to concentrate, then if he occasionally closes his eyes for a few moments, it will be permissible. But this permissibility due to circumstances does not abrogate the Masnoon practice of open eyes. It will only be prescribed temporarily to assist the musalli in the acquisition of concentration and for warding off the avalanche of shaitaani wasaawis. It is erroneous and not permissible to elevate closed eyes to a higher status than performing Salaat with open eyes, and to justify the permissibility on the basis of the benefits in closed eyes.

Similarly, the benefits pointed out by Allamah Munaawi are not a basis for demoting the practice of silent Thikr which is commanded by the Qur'aan and evidenced by the Sunnah and the unambiguous rulings of the Fuqaha.

The error of the venerable Mufti Sahib is therefore manifest. Allamah Munaawi's view has to be set aside or reconciled to eliminate the conflict. Allamah Munaawi's opinion cannot supersede and abrogate the command of the Qur'aan and the original practice of the Sunnah. The personal opinion of Allaamah Munaawi (rahmatullah alayh) who was a follower of the Shaafi' Math-hab, has no status in view of its stark conflict with the explicit Rulings of the Mutaqaddimeen Ahnaaf Fuqaha in

general, and with the verdict of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) in particular.

In fact, Allaamah Munaawi's view is in conflict with the official ruling of the Shaafi' Math-hab as well. It has already been mentioned earlier that even according to the Shaafi' Math-hab, *Ikhfa' is Mustahab.* Our Taqleed of Imaam A'zam (rahmatullah alayh) has liberated us from the taqleed of Ulama who appeared on the horizon centuries after him. Thus, Allaamah Munaawi's opinion is not a *daleel* to present in opposition to the categoric pronouncements of our Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has only presented the personal opinion of some Ulama who are not among the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, and who appeared centuries later. In view of the conflict with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, the venerable Mufti Sahib should discover an appropriate reconciliation to eliminate the conflict with the *Mansoos Hukm of the superiority of Thikr-e-Khafi.*

In the attempt to justify the imagined superiority of loud Thikr, the venerable Mufti Sahib has ignored *all* authorities of the Shariah and opted for the view of Allamah Munaawi (rahmatullah alayh) who holds no status in relation to the Mutaqaddimeen Fuqaha.

There is a very significant difference between the verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and the opinions of Ulama who came many centuries later. Whereas all the verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen are based on explicit Qur'aanic and Hadith *Nusoos*, further reinforced by irrefutable rational *(Aqli) dalaa-il*, the views of the later Ulama, instead of being in harmony with the *Nusoos*, are in harmony with practices which developed centuries after the Sahaabah. This necessitated a

reconciliation between the *Nusoos* and the practices and customs in vogue. Invariably, we observe, the *Nusoos* being interpreted to strike a balance with the practices and customs. While the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen's verdicts were subservient to Qur'aanic and Hadith *Nusoos,* the later Ulama painfully sought to reconcile the *Nusoos* with the practices of the Sufiya and the customs which had become entrenched in the masses such as the gatherings in the Musaajid and the special forms of Thikr, etc. after the Fardh Salaat in the Musaajid, and also in other avenues of life.

Another significant factor in the dispute is that the venerable Mufti Sahib has been unable to produce explicit evidence for his personal views regarding collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid. He could only manage to cite Qur'aanic verses and Ahaadith which bear no relevance to congregational forms of public Thikr displays. Then he submitted these *Nusoos* to personal interpretations which he obtained from the works of Ulama who came onto the scene many centuries after the Khairul Quroon. He only has the opinions of some Ulama of later time, but no support from the Sahaabah and the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

CORRUPTION OF THE HEARTS

Proffering another fallacy for his theory, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"The present time is one in which the hearts of people have been overtaken by negligence and hardness, and our thoughts have swayed and become corrupt, and it is in these evil times that not much benefit can be derived from silent zikr as can be derived from loud zikr except to the extent that Allah Ta'ala desires."*

This is a typical argument of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah whom the venerable Mufti Sahib is emulating in his inordinate zeal for elevating and promoting loud collective Thikr programmes for public display. It is also the argument of one who has conceded by implication his bankruptcy in the sphere of Shar'i *Dalaa-il.* The Mufti Sahib should add to the list of evils which he has mentioned, riya, ujub and takabbur. The evil, corrupt and hardened hearts about which he has lamented disgorge the noxious stench of riya, ujub and takabbur. Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh), therefore, maintained that these prescribed Thikr programmes intensify the spiritual ailments of the corrupt mureed. Most of these mureeds of this age are puffed up with pride and arrogance. They labour under the satanic notion of self-piety. When they sway their heads to and fro, chanting away their Thikr in public performances, they gain false notions of their *buzrugiyat.* Shaitaan entraps them with false ideas of their holiness.

There is a greater need in these times to abstain from loud collective Thikr performances in the public. The spiritual corruption is intensified by these programmes which have developed into bid'ah practices. The contention of the Mufti Sahib is baseless. Any averment which conflicts with the original *Ahkaam* of the Shariah and which aim for their substitution by practices conjured by the minds of men of later times, must incumbently be rejected as bid'ah.

HADHRAT THAANVI'S NASEEHAT

Highlighting the corruption of the *juhala* in relation to the perpetration of bid'ah, Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) said:

"After every Namaaz or after Fajr and Asr, all the Namaazis collectively and *jahran* (audibly) recite *Lailaha illallaah.* They furthermore, observe this practice with regularity whereas the Buzrugs did not order this practice for all and sundry. It is designed for only special persons. However, the juhala (ignoramuses) have made this practice universal *(aam)* and incumbent. It is for this reason that the Ulama have proclaimed this practice bid'ah. Now they accuse the Ulama of branding Thikrullah as bid'ah.

Although no one may be pleased with the Ulama (on account of their Amr Bil Ma'roof), the Muhaqqiq Sufiya are pleased with them. They appreciate the Ulama. Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh) who was a very great Muhaqqiq Sufi, said that the acts of the Sufiyah are extremely subtle *(Daqeeq)* which are beyond the comprehension of the masses. Hence, it is incumbent for the masses not to follow the Sufiyah in *Uloom.*

On the contrary, they should follow the Jamhoor Ulama because they (the Ulama) are the supervisors and administrators of the Shariah. In fact, the universe can remain in an orderly state only by following the Ulama………..These Ulama (of the Haqq) are the Guards who protect the Imaan of the masses. If they abandon their office, then the Sufi Sahib will have to abandon his cloisture and execute this duty. Then all his tasawwuf, states and ecstacies will be forgotten.

The duty of *Islaah-e-Khalq is Fardh Kifaayah.* If the Molvies abandon this duty, then it will devolve on the Sufis. Therefore, O Sufi! You and your cloister will remain safe as long as this Guarding Jamaa't (of Ulama-e-Haqq) subsists on earth. You sleep in comfort during the night. When your eyes open, you engage in namaaz and Thikr while the Ulama…………." *End of Hadhrat Thaanvi's exposition*

We hope that this naseehat exercises a salutary influence on the venerable Mufti Sahib who is advocating the same type of bid'ah which Hakimul Ummat has criticized. Just as the masses are condemning the Ulama and accusing them of branding Thikrullah as bid'ah, so too is the venerable Mufti Sahib slandering the Ulama and accusing them of preventing Thikrullah.

THE AHAADITH ON THE SUPERIORITY OF SILENT THIKR

The views and Ahaadith regarding the superiority of silent Thikr narrated by the Mufassireen and Fuqaha have already been mentioned and discussed. We reproduce here some more narrations to show the validity of the ruling of the Fuqaha.

(1) Hadhrat Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) narrated: "Thikr-e-Khafi which the guarding angels are unable to hear is seventy times superior to that Thikr which the guarding angels are able to hear." *(Tafseerul Hawaari)*

(2) Wakee' narrated from Usaamah Bin Zaid, from Ibn Abi Labeebah from Sa'd who said that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "The best Thikr is Khafi." *(Ibn Abi Shaibah)*

(3) Abu Dawood narrated from Hishaam, from Yahya from a man, from Aishah who said: "The Thikr-e-Khafi which is not recorded by the guarding angels is seventy times superior to other forms of Thikr."*(Ibn Abi Shaibah)*

(4) Abul Hasan Muhammad Bin Qaasim >Abu Ishaaq Ibraaheem Bin Ahmad Bin Rajaa' >Abul Husain Ghaazi > Muhammad Bin Humaid > Ibraaheem Bin Al-Mukhtaar > Muaawiyah > Zuhri > Urwah narrated that Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) said: "Verily, Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'The Thikr which the guarding angels are unable to hear is increased (in reward) seventy times over

the Thikr which the guarding angels can hear.” *(Shu’bul Imaan of Baihqi)*

(5) Abu Haashim Rifaai’ >Ishaaq > Muaawiyah > Zuhri > Urwah>, narrating from Aishah (radhiyallahu anha): “Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would elevate the excellence by seventy stages of the Thikr which the guarding angels could not hear.

(6) ….From this angle, the reward is immense for the heart’s engrossment in Thikr. This is supported by the narration of Baihaqi: “The Thikr which the guarding angels are unable to hear exceeds by seventy times (in reward) the Thikr which they can hear.

(7) Ibn Adi > Nu’maan Bin Ahmad Al-Waasti > Idrees Bin Haatim > Muhammad Bin Ahmad > Muaawiyah > Zuhri > Urwah > Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) narrating from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): “He would give Thikr-e-Khafi superiority of 70 times over other Thikr.” *(Meezaanul I’tidaal)*

This Hadith is narrated with other chains (*asaaneed*) as well in many kutub of Hadith.

(8) Ahmad (Imaam Ahmad) said: Abu Saeed Haarithi said: Yahya Bin Saeed narrated that Usaamah Bin Yazeed said Daqeeqi narrated that Uthmaan Bin Umar said that Usaamah narrated from Ibn Labeebah who narrated from Sa’d Bin Maalik, and Yazeed narrating from Abdur Rahmaan who narrated from Sa’d who narrated that Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: “The best Thikr is Khafi.

Ahmad Daqeeqi said that Abu Sufyaan Al-Humaidi narrated from Abdul Majeed Bin Ja'far who narrated from Usaamah Bin Zaid who narrated from Muhammad Bin Abdur Rahman Bin Labeebah who said: We were with Sa'd, then he narrated the same Hadith." *(Az-Zuhd Wa Sifatuz Zaahideen of Imaam Ahmad)*

(9) Ahmad Bin Ka'b narrated that Idrees Bin Haatim narrated that Muhamad Bin Hasan Al-Waasiti narrated from Muaawiyah bin Yahya who narrated from Zuhri who narrated from Urwah who narrated from Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) who narratd that Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said.............. "The superiority of Thikr-e-khafi is seventy times more than other forms." *(Al-Fawaaidul Muntafaah)*

(10) Eesa Bin Ahmad narrated that Ibn Wahab narrated that Usaamah narrated from Muhammad Bin Abdur Rahmaan Bin Labeebah that Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas said: "I heard Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) saying: 'Verily, the best Thikr is khafi...' "

(12) Sa'd Bin Nadhr narrated that Qaasim Bin Asbagh narrated that Muhammad Bin Wathaah narrated that Abu Bakr Bin Abi Shaibah narrated that Wakee' narrated from Usaamah Bin Zaid who narrated from Ibn Abi Labeebah who narrated from Sa'd who said that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "The best rizq is that which is sufficient and the best Thikr is khafi."

(Jaami' Bayaanil Ilm)

(13) And he (Abu Abdullah) narrated from Sa'd that Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "The best Thikr is khafi, and he (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'And call unto your Rabb with humility and silently.', and he said: 'Remember your Rabb in your heart and silently and in a voice less than jahr.' " *(Khalqu Af'aal lil Ibaad lil Bukhaari)*

(14) "The best Thikr is khafi and the best rizq is that which suffices." Abu Ya'la, Al-Askari and Ibn Hibbaan narrated it. Ibn Hibbaan authenticated it from Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas who narrated it from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). *(Kashful Khifa')*

(15) Yahya Al-Qattaan >Usaamah >Muhammad Bin Abdur Rahmaan bin Labeebah > Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas narrated from Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): 'The best Thikr is khafi and the best rizq is that which suffices.' Similarly did Ibn Wahab narrate from Yahya. And, Wakee' narrated it from Usaamah Bin Zaid who narrated it from Ibn Abi Labeebah who narrated from Sa'd. Abu Zur'ah said that Ibn Abi Labeeah is most authentic. *(Ilalul Hadith)*

HADHRAT ABDULLAH IBN MAS'OOD (radhiyallahu anhu) AND THE BID'AH OF HALQAH THIKR

Among the strongest *dalaa-il* (proofs and arguments) in refutation of bid'ah acts such as collective Thikr performances in the Musaajid which appear in the form of ibaadat, is the expulsion of a *halqah zikr* group from the Musjid by the illustrious Sahaabi, Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

A group of people engaging in *halqah Thikr* were reciting *Lailaha illallaah, Subhaanallah, Alhamdulillaah and Allahu Akbar* in chorus. They all recited the Thikr loudly and congregationally. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), the eminent Sahaabi of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), branded the group as Mubtadieen (bid'atis) and ordered their expulsion from the Musjid.

The action of Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is the strongest and most direct rejection of any superficial act presented in the form of ibaadat. Any act which was not ibaadat to the Salf-e-Saaliheen but presented as ibaadat is bid'ah in the light of the Qur'aan, Sunnah and practice of the Salf-e-Saaliheen.

The type of loud collective Thikr *(Ijtimaa' jahri Thikr)* programmes which have of recent developed in the Musaajid under the aegis of those who are associated with the Deoband School and the Chishti Silsilah, come conspicuously within the scope of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's condemnation.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has laboured in vain to dismiss the Hadith and action of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood in the attempt to justify the loud collective Thikr performances in the Musaajid. Once Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was informed of a group of people engaging in a perculiar form of Thikr. The leader of the group instructed his companions to recite *Laa-ilaha illaallaahu* 100 times. Then in chorus the group recited. Then he instructed them to recite *Subhaanallaah, then Allaahu Akbar*, each 100 times. This they did in unison. Meanwhile they were counting the number with pebbles. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), addressing them said:

"Use the pebbles to count your sins. I guarantee that none of your virtuous deeds will be destroyed (by counting your sins). Alas! O Ummah of Muhammad! (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). How swiftly have you fallen in ruin! The Sahaabah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are still numerous in your presence. The garments of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) have not become old and his unbroken utensils are still present. But you have opened the door of deviation." (Musnad-e-Daarmi)

Allaamah Qaadhi Ibraahim narrates as follows:

"I am Abdullah Bin Mas'ood. I take oath by Him (Allah) besides whom there is no deity. Verily, you have produced a dark bid'ah or you have surpassed the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).", i.e. in knowledge and practice" (Majaalisul Abraar)

Shaikhul Islam Ibn Daqeeq presents the *riwaayat* as follows: *"I am Ibn Mas'ood. So, whoever knows me, knows who I am. Whoever does not know me, then know*

that I am Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood. Do you think that you are more guided than Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and his Ashaab? Verily, you have innovated a dark bid'ah, or you have acquired greater status in knowledge than the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)." Ibn Mas'ood has refuted this act notwithstanding the probability of it coming within the scope of Thikr in general." (Ahkaamul Ahkaam)

Allaamah Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Khawaarzami narrates:

"Thikr bil Jahr is haraam since it has been authentically reported that Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had expelled a group from the Musjid. They were reciting Tahleel and Durood loudly, and he commented: 'I deem you to be nothing but mubtadieen (bid'atis)." (Shaami)

In sheer desperation, the venerable Mufti Sahib, clutching at straws, first seeks to dismiss the entire Hadith by citing the version of Allaamah Aalusi in Ruhul Ma'aani. He also refers flabbily to some doubts cast by Allaamah Suyuti regarding the narrators of the Hadith. On the basis of these figments of conjecture, the venerable Mufti Saheb, concludes: "Thus it is clear that these words are not proven to be the words of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu)."

Despite his claim of lack of proof, the venerable Mufti Sahib in the very next line inexplicably contradicts himself by saying:

"However, on the other hand we find that these words of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) are narrated in Sunan-e-Daarmi, Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani, thus how can it be said that these words are not proven to be those of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud

(Radhiyallahu anhu)? From the narrations of Sunan-e-Daarmi, Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani it is proven that this incident (i.e. of the group of people who were occupied in making loud zikr in the Masjid) did take place; however it is not proven from any narration that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) commanded them to leave the Masjid. Yes, the narrations of Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq Tabraani suggest that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) commanded them to disperse. However one narrator from amongst the chain of narrators of this Hadith has been omitted. Therefore the fact that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) made them leave the Masjid is not proven from any authentic narration."

This strange warped argument is bereft of validity. First he maintained that "these words are not proven". Then the Mufti Sahib himself questions this averment, and presents reliable Muhadditheen who have recorded the narrations in this regard. On the basis of the appearance of this narration in Daarmi, Musannaf of Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani, the venerable Mufti Sahib concedes: *"it is proven that this incident did take place."* Now on what basis does the Mufti Sahib claim that *"this incident did take place"*? Obviously on the basis of the three reliable Hadith Kutub which he has mentioned. After admitting the proof for the occurrence of this incident, the venerable Mufti Sahib astoundingly claims the expulsion of the group is not proven. If the 'expulsion is not proven, on what basis is the incident proven?

The incident comprises the expulsion as well. If the narration describing the incident is proven, then automatically the expulsion too is proven. The proof for

the 'incident' accepted by the venerable Mufti Sahib, is the proof for the expulsion as well.

With regard to the narration in Sunan-e-Daarmi, the venerable Mufti Sahib has committed a grave injustice with his fleeting reference to it, and by a distorted presentation to convey the impression that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu) was not annoyed with them nor objected to their bid'ah. The hadith is recorded in Sunan Daarmi as follows:

"Al-Hakam Bin Mubaarak narrated to us that Amr Bin Yahya said: 'I heard my father narrating from his father who said: 'We were seated at the door of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood before the evening Salaat. When he would come out, we would walk with him to the Musjid. Then (while we were waiting), Abu Musa Ash'ari (A Sahaabi) came and said: 'Has Abu Abdur Rahmaan (i.e. Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood) emerged?' We said: 'No.' Then he sat with us until he (Ibn Mas'ood) came out. When he emerged, we all stood up. Abu Musa said: 'O Aba Abdir Rahmaan! I have just now seen in the Musjid an act which is displeasing to me, (but) Alhamdulillaah, I did not see anything but goodness.' He (Ibn Mas'ud) said: 'And what is that?' Abu Musa said: 'You shall soon see. I saw some groups in the Musjid sitting in a halqah (circle) waiting for the Salaat. In every halqah there is a man, and in their hands are pebbles. (i.e. in each group-leader's hand is a pebble). He says: 'Recite takbeer 100 times. Then they will recite takbeer 100 times. Then he says: Recite tahleel 100 times. Then they recite tahleel 100 times. Then he says: Recite Tasbeeh 100 times. Then they recite Tasbeeh 100 times.'

Ibn Mas'ood said: 'What did you say to them?' Abu Musa Ash'ari said: 'I said nothing to them in anticipation of your opinion or your command.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'Why did you not command them to count their sins (with the pebbles), and assure them that their virtues would not be ruined (by counting their sins instead of making Thikr in this way)?'

Then he went and we accompanied him until we came to one of the halqahs. He stood by them and said: 'What is this that I am seeing you do?' They said: 'O Aba Abdillaah! These are pebbles with which we count the takbeer, tahleel and tasbeeh.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'Then count your sins. I assure you that your good deeds will not be destroyed in the least bit (by counting your sins with the pebbles). Alas, O Ummah of Muhammad! How swiftly have you been ruined? These are the Sahaabah of your Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), who are still numerous among you. These are his clothes which have as yet not become old. These are his utensils which are not yet broken. (By this he indicated the close proximity to the age of Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam). I take oath by That Being in Whose Hand is my life! Are you perhaps on a way which is more guided than the Millat of Muhammad? Or have you opened a doorway to deviation (dhalaalah)?' They said: 'Wallaah! O Aba Abdir Rahmaan! We intended nothing but goodness." Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood said: 'There were many who intended goodness which they never attained. Verily, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said to us: "Verily, there will be people who will recite the Qur'aan, but it will not go beyond their throats." By Allah, I do not know if perhaps most of you are from among them.' Then

he turned away from them. Amr Bin Salmah said: 'I saw most of the people of these halqahs fighting against us (the Sahaabah) on the day of the Battle of Nahrawaan with the Khawaarij."

From the slip-shod and sketchy manner in which the venerable Mufti Sahib has presented a shadow of this narration of Sunan Daarmi, the injustice is apparent. The narration emphatically registers the annoyance and criticism voiced by Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) when he beheld the bid'ah halqah Thikr which had been innovated. Hence, he described their act as the opening of the doorway of *dhalaalah* (deviation). While the actual words of expulsion which appear in other versions of this narration in other Hadith kutub, are not to be found in this particular narration of Daarmi, the fatwa of *dhalaalah* is stated emphatically by Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Should it be momentarily assumed that he did not physically expel the bid'atis from the Musjid, which according to the venerable Mufti 'is not proved', then at least the Mufti Sahib should concede that the *'fatwa of dhalaalah'* and his displeasure and other comments of criticism are proved beyond any shadow of doubt.

It is highly improper to refute the expulsion merely because the words describing it do not appear in Daarmi. The expulsion of the innovators is described in narrations appearing in other books of Hadith. There is no valid reason for faulting the claims of expulsion. And, even if the expulsion version is intransigently denied without basis, then too, the fact that the halqah Thikr was branded *'dhalaalah'* by this *Jaleelul Qadr* Sahaabi should be

adequate for the comprehension of every unbiased Mu'min in quest of the Haqq.

Confirming the expulsion of the *halqah group of innovators,* the following is recorded in *Fataawa Bazzaaziyyah:* "It is mentioned in Fataawa Qaadhi that raising the voice with Thikr is haraam. Verily, the narration from Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is Saheeh (authentic). He had heard a group had congregated in the Musjid. They were reciting Tahleel and Durood on Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) aloud. Then he reprimanded them and said: 'We did not practise this during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). I do not see you but as innovators (mubtadi-een).' He continued repeating this statement until he expelled them from the Musjid."

The venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"Yes, the narrations of Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani suggest that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (Radhiyallahu anhu) commanded them to disperse."*

There is no substance in this argument. Assuming that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had not expelled the group, but had only ordered them to disperse, in which way would his action serve the cause of the venerable Mufti Sahib? Whether he ordered dispersal or expulsion, the reason for his action is the same. He entered the Musjid and saw the *halqahs* engaging in Thikrullaah. He intervened, stopped them, severely castigated and reprimanded them as all narrations pertaining to this episode confirm. The salient factors in these narrations in Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq as well as in the narrations in the other kutub of Ahaadith, are:

- Do you think that you are more guided than the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)
- You are hanging on to the tail of dhalaalah (deviation).
- You have innovated a dark bid'ah.
- Have you surpassed in knowledge the Sahaabah of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? If you have acted in conflict with the tareeqah of the Sahaabah, then you have gone far, very far astray.

The Hadith in Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq states: *"Then he (Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood) ordered them to disperse."* In this narration there is no 'suggestion' of dispersal as the venerable Mufti Sahib claims. There is an explicit command to break up the *halqahs* and to disperse. Reading this narration in conjunction with other versions which explicitly mention expulsion, it should be obvious that the expulsion was preceded by dispersal of the groups inside the Musjid.

Even on the assumption that they were not expelled, but only dispersed, then too, the conclusion is clear, namely, Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) having branded their specific form of loud *halqah* Thikr as a dark bid'ah, terminated the activity. The participants were ordered to disperse. When at least the break-up of the *halqahs* and the dispersal of the groups are confirmed, then what constrained the Mufti Sahib to say that the narration only 'suggested' dispersal? The sheer desperation in the quest for 'proof' which in reality does not exist culminates in irrationality.

This narration pertaining to the dispersal/expulsion of the innovators is also narrated in *Al-I'tisaam* with an *Isnaad* which varies from the different Chains of Narration mentioned in Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq. The narration in *Al-I'tisaam* reads: *"Abdullah (Ibn Mas'ood) passed by a man in the Musjid who was instructing his companions to recite tasbeeh ten times and tahleel ten times. Then Abdullah said: 'Either you are more guided than the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or you are astray...............Have you been guided to that to which your Nabi was not guided? Verily, you have taken firm hold of the tail of deviation (dhalaalah)."*

The following narration also appears in *Al-I'tisaam: "It was mentioned to Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that some people in Kufa were reciting tasbeeh with pebbles in the Musjid. He then approached them. Everyone among them had a heap of pebbles in front of himself. Then he (Ibn Mas'ood) struck them repeatedly with the pebbles until they were expelled from the Musjid, and he said: 'Verily, you have produced a dark bid'ah and you have (conveyed by your actions) that you have superseded the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in knowledge."*

This narration also appears in the kutub, *Al-Mudkhal, Az-Zuhd Li Ibnil Hambal, Talbees Iblees, etc.*, and has been used by these authorities in refutation of bid'ah. They all have accepted the authenticity of the narration, hence it is presented as a basis for refuting bid'ah and practices which superficially appear as ibaadat.

In another desperate and ludicrous attempt to dislodge these narrations, the Mufti Sahib states: *"However, one narrator from amongst the chain of narrators of this Hadith has been omitted. Therefore the fact that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu) made them leave the Masjid is not proven from any authentic narration."*

The Mufti Sahib's claim is baseless. It is absurd to reject the authenticity of the Hadith merely on account of the name of one narrator not being explicitly mentioned in one Hadith. There are other Chains of Narration for this Hadith, which mention all the names of the narrators. In fact, in one *Isnaad* the person who had directly informed Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was another senior Sahaabi, namely, Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash'ari (radhiyallahu anhu).

The name of the supposedly 'missing link' is explicitly stated in the Hadith which is recorded in *Hulyatul Auliya* where it is mentioned as follows: *"Qais Bin Abi Haazim and Abuz Za'raa' narrated it from Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). Then Abuz Za'raa', referred to as ' the man' who came to him. Then he said: Musayyib Bin Najeeh came to Abdullah." The full isnaad is: Sulaiman >Ali > Abu Naeem > Sufyaan > Salmah Bin Kuhail > Abuz Za'raa' who said that Musayyib Bin Najeeh came to Abdullah Bin Mas'ood..........."* (Hulyatul Auliya)

The claim of the 'unknown' narrator is thus dispelled. And, even if he is unknown, the accumulative effect of the different *Asaaneed* elevates the status of the Hadith.. Furthermore, this Hadith is presented by numerous Authorities of the Shariah in refutation of innovations. It has thus satisfied the criterion of *Talaqqi bil Qubool*

which is a principle on the basis of which a narration is authenticated. The accreditation by the Fuqaha validates the Hadith and it is then not reliant on even an *Isnaad for its authenticity.* This principle has already been explained earlier on.

In *Ihkaamul Ahkaam,* the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is also cited in refutation of bid'ah. The Hadith is accepted as authentic, hence it is said in *Ihkaamul Ahkaam:* "Similarly, is the narration which is reported from Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), which is recorded by Tabarani in his Mu'jamah with its Sanad from Qais Bin Abi Haazim."

Fataawa Rahimiyyah also presents this Hadith in refutation of Bid'ah. Thus it is mentioned: "It is Mustahab to recite Takbeer along the route to the Eidgah, but not collectively in unison. Since it is not the established method of reciting it, the Fuqaha said that it is not permissible."

In *Ahsanul Fataawa* Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad (rahmatullah alayh), after narrating the various versions and different *Asaaneed* of the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), as well as the arguments of those who claim that these narrations are weak or unsubstantiated, says: *"Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), after branding as mubtadi-een (bid'atis) those who had engaged in loud collective Thikr, and reprimanding them, expelled them from the Musjid."* Commenting further, Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad said:

"Those who legalize Thikr sessions (loud collective Thikr) have presented three arguments against this narration of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu):

(i) There is no substantiation for this narration in the books of Hadith.
(ii) This narration is in conflict with other authentic Ahaadith which explicitly permit Thikr bil jahr.
(iii) The group of people (mentioned in the narration) must have added some act of bid'ah, hence they were expelled.

The first argument is incorrect because Tabaraani has narrated it with several *Asaaneed.* Besides this, most of the Fuqaha-e-Kiraam authenticated and validated this narration with the statement: "Verily the narration from Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is Saheeh."

The second argument is an invalid refutation. (There is no conflict as alleged). Therefore, the third averment is applicable." – *End of Ahsanul Fataawa's comments.*

As far as the authenticity of the narration is concerned, the claims of it being unauthentic are baseless. A synopsis of the discussion on this issue is:

- Many Muhadditheen have narrated the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) in their compilations.
- No solid grounds for denouncing the authenticity have been produced. The only flimsy argument presented is that one narrator is 'unknown'. This claim too is devoid of substance as the name of the supposedly unknown narrator is stated in one narration. There has been no serious assault on the *Isnaad.*

- The Hadith is narrated by different Chains. The accumulative effect is the elevation of the status to authenticity.
- The Authorities of the Shariah have utilized this Hadith as a strong basis for criticizing and refuting bid'ah, notably, loud collective Thikr in Musjids.
- The strongest argument in favour of the authenticity of the Hadith is the acceptance of the narration by the Fuqaha. They have utilized this Hadith in substantiation of their Fiqhi rulings. This by itself is the evidence for the authenticity of the Hadith.

Thus, the following appears in Qaadhi Khaan: "Raising the voice with Thikr is haraam. Verily, it has been authentically narrated from Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that a group of people had gathered..........." Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad (rahmatullah alayh), Author of Ahsanul Fataawa, states: "Most of the Fuqaha had authenticated the Hadith with the comment: *"Verily, the narration has been authentically narrated from Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu)...."*

There is therefore, no scope for the claim that the Hadith of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is not authentic.

Ahsanul Fataawa after presenting the aforementioned three arguments tendered in refutation of the narration of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), concisely dismissed the arguments as baseless. We have already expanded on the

'authenticity' question. Regarding the second argument (mentioned above), the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib states:

"Answer 2: Ulama have stated that even if the Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu) is proven, it contradicts many other authentic Ahaadeeth of Rasoolullah (Salallahu alaihi wasallam). There are also other narrations of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) which contradict this statement of his. For example, Hazrat Abu Waa-il (Radhiyallahu anhu) says: "Some people are of the opinion that Hazrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (Radhiyallahu anhu) was not in favour of the practice of loud Thikr, but this was not so..........' Thus we see that the actions of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) contradicts his words, therefore preference would be given to his actions over his words."

Firstly, the averment, *"Preference would be given to his actions over his words"*, is an incorrect 'principle'.The principle is the other way around, namely, preference should be given to words over action. For example, a particular action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which conflicts with his commands, may not be cited to cancel the commands he has issued. Thus, Rasulullah's act of allowing Hadhrat Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) to view the Habshis engaging in a singing performance or his action of not reprimanding a group of females whom he had heard singing, may not be presented as proof for the alleged permissibility of singing and music. These isolated actions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) cannot be presented in

refutation of the mass of Qur'aanic and Hadith evidence – Rasulullah's explicit commands – prohibiting music. There exists valid interpretation for the seemingly contradictory action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Similarly, assuming that there is a contradiction between the words and actions of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), then preference will be given to his explicit words and commands, not to his actions which appear in conflict with the Qur'aanic and Sunnah evidence. His seemingly contradictory action will have to be incumbently reconciled with the clear commands and meanings of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, as well as with his own teachings and expressions.

Secondly, the claim of contradiction between the words and actions of Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is fictitious. The current dispute is not on the question of loud Thikr being permissible or not permissible. The permissibility of loud Thikr is not refuted. However, the venerable Mufti Sahib has diverted the discussion from the real issue of contention and has dwelt on another uncontested question, namely, permissibility of loud Thikr.

It is glaringly incorrect to say that Ibn Mas'ood's expulsion of the innovators is in conflict with his words and practice of audible Thikr. These are two different issues and different practices. There is no conflict here. Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) condemned, reprimanded and expelled the group, not on the basis of loud Thikr. He expelled them because of the new innovated form of the Thikr – *the halqah form in*

which they were reciting loudly in chorus. This was a form which had no origin in the Sunnah, yet it was being given prominence and publicly portrayed as if it was a Masnoon act of ibaadat. If he had not nipped the bid'ah in the bud, the practice would have become entrenched in the Ummah. Citing from *Rasaa-il,* Mufti Rashid Ahmad of Ahsanul Fataawa states: *"If the expulsion from the Musjid was literal, then it is probable that it was on account of their belief that (their new act) was ibaadat, and (on account of) teaching people that it is bid'ah. It is possible for a permissible act to become impermissible because of some accretion."*

In fact, the venerable Mufti Sahib concedes the probability of an accretion which constrained Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) to evict the innovators. Thus, the Mufti Sahib says: *"it was in order to prevent the door of innovation from being opened."* This is precisely the primary reason for the criticism against the current loud collective Thikr programmes being conducted in the Musaajid. If the danger of the door of bid'ah opening existed during the time of even the Sahaabah, hence Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) deemed it appropriate and imperative to resort to the extreme measure of preventing the Thikr programme and expelling the perpetrators from the Musjid, then to a much greater degree does this danger exist in this age.

There is hardly any piety left in people. The venerable Mufti Sahib himself has claimed that the hearts in this era are hardened and spiritually corrupt. *Islaah of the Nafs* (self reformation) has become a closed avenue. Even the so-called sheikhs of today lack understanding and expertise in this sphere. It is for this reason that we find

them staging public Thikr performances as a subterfuge to conceal their gross incompetence and ignorance in this field. In fact, in giving prominence and in purveying collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid, they are resembling the *juhala* to whom Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) has referred in relation to one such *Ijtimaai'* Thikr programme. (See page 276*)

There is no doubt that these public performances are developing into entrenched hardcore bid'ah practices, hence even the venerable personalities who practise these non-Sunnah acts in public rush to vindicate their acts of display. They rush seeking the aid of even shaitaani radio stations of the fussaaq and fujjaar in their desperation to sustain their bid'ah sayyiah. In fact, they not only embark on defending and justifying their unsubstantiated practices, they demote the actual Sunnah acts and bestow preference and higher status to their personal activities portrayed as Masnoon ibaadat which they back up with dreams which in turn are equated to the status of *Shar'i dalai-il.*

If the venerable Mufti Sahib's desperate defence of collective loud Thikr is viewed intelligently, without bias and emotionalism, the extremely low ebb to which he has descended in his quest for 'proofs' will be clearly discerned. When a senior Mufti fails to understand the simple mas'alah of the superiority of silent Thikr being a unanimous ruling of the Authorities of the Ummah since the age of the Sahaabah, and he labours painfully to elevate a permissible act of lower degree to a status above the Masnoon act, then the bid'ah dimension is conspicuous.

The venerable Mufti Sahib as well as others before him have conceded, albeit very reluctantly, that Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's extreme action was to close the door of bid'ah. Yet he sees no need to follow the example of this great Sahaabi to ensure that the evil gate of bid'ah is not opened in our community by initiating practices unsubstantiated in the Sunnah, and in emulation of the Ahl-e-Bareilwi bid'atis.

It has to be reiterated for the sake of greater clarity that Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's action was primarily constrained by the new form of the Thikr programme which the innovators had introduced. He therefore sarcastically instructed them to rather count their sins with the pebbles instead of using them for Thikr.

No one can accuse Hadhrat Ibn Masood (radhiyallahu anhu) of preventing Thikrullaah. Obviously this was not the purpose of the expulsion. He was preventing a bid'ah gaining a foothold in the community. When he did not prevent Thikrullah, the question is: What did he prevent? And, why did he expel 'thaakireen' from the Musjid? Only prejudice clouds the mind rendering it incapable of understanding such a simple issue. The expulsion was not because they were engaging in Thikrullaah. The action was on account of the bid'ah method which they had introduced.

There is therefore no conflict between Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's words and actions. His action was to prevent the door of bid'ah opening, not to prevent any type of Thikr which is lawful.

The venerable Mufti Sahib also presenting another flimsy argument attributed to Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh), says: *"According to Allamah*

Aaloosi (Rahmatullah alaih), it could also be that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) prevented these people from making loud zikr in the Musjid as they were screaming when making zikr."

Nowhere in the many variants of the Hadith attributed to Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is it mentioned that these thaakireen were screaming when making Thikr. The inference is utterly baseless. There is no indication in any of the many narrations to suggest that they were 'screaming when making zikr'. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's focus was on the manner in which the programme was being executed. He clearly informed them that their practice was in conflict with the Thikr practices of the Sahaabah. He did not order them to lower their voices. He branded the whole Thikr practice of these people as a dark bid'ah. He remarked that they should rather use their pebbles to enumerate their sins. If it was *jahr-e-mufrit* which he was targeting, he would have emulated Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and ordered: *"Have mercy on your souls!"*. Thus, there is no substance in the figment offered by the venerable Mufti, viz., these people were perhaps screaming in their Thikr.

Presenting another legless and fallacious argument, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"The narration of Sunan-e-Daarmi suggests that the people who were making loud zikr in the Masjid belonged to a deviated sect and their only intention was to initiate an innovation amongst Muslims."*

At the juncture when this episode had transpired there was absolutely no suggestion of them belonging to a

deviate sect. Years later, these innovators had linked up with the Khwaarij to fight against the Sahaabah. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was aware that the perpetrators of bid'ah would at a later stage develop into a sect of bid'atis. The Bareilwi bid'atis have developed their own sect. Now the Mufti Sahib is following in the same direction. This is the way in which sects develop. If this new bid'ah of public performances of Thikr becomes entrenched, then in the generations to come, there will be a Deobandi sect of bid'ah. The one bid'ah will lead to another bid'ah. The Deobandi bid'atis and the Bareilwi bid'atis will then become bedfellows and compatriots in a coalition aligned against the Ahl-e-Haqq who condemn all bid'ah and dhalaalah of whatever persuasion and breed.

The Mufti Sahib says: *"their only intention was to initiate an innovation"*. Now what was that act which was an innovation which those people had initiated? Was it their Salaat or their Qiraa't? What exactly was that act which even the Mufti Sahib says is 'an innovation'? Which act did Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) brand as a dark bid'ah? The act of bid'ah for which they were castigated and expelled was their loud collective Thikr in the Musjid. This is the precise reason for the desire in this era to prevent people from staging public performance of Thikr practices which have neither origin nor sanction in the Sunnah.

From whichever angle the practice of the deviates is viewed, even the Mufti Sahib is constrained to concede that their act of public, loud collective Thikr in the Musjid was bid'ah.

All the arguments presented in the exercise to dislodge and dismiss the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) are misdirected and baseless. Some of these arguments would have been valid if this Hadith was presented in total refutation of audible Thikr. But this is not the case. The action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is cited in refutation of bid'ah. Even the venerable Mufti Sahib and everyone else concede that bid'ah is haraam. Hence no one is justified to fabricate grounds for the dismissal of this narration when it is utilized to refute bid'ah, especially after the Fuqaha have authenticated it. Since we are not presenting this narration in an attempt to prove audible Thikr to be prohibited, the entire argument of the venerable Mufti Sahib is bereft of substance and direction.

The Hadith of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated by Tabraani by way of a number of *Asaaneed*, by Daarmi, Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq and by many other authorities, and authenticated by the illustrious Fuqaha does not negate audible Thikr within prescribed limits of the Shariah. Its focus was on elimination of bid'ah and closing the avenue of bid'ah. It is therefore absurd to produce in opposition to this narration, other Ahaadith from which permissibility of audible Thikr could be inferred.

Pursuing a futile argument in the bid to establish a futile aim, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"When an action is proven from the Glorious Qur'an or Ahaadeeth, then too it is not pernicious for a Sahabi to classify it as an innovation."*

The translator of the venerable Mufti Sahib's booklet has incorrectly translated. The term 'pernicious' means

'ruinous, destructive'. This word renders the meaning in the context of the discussion atrocious and incorrect. From the several examples the Mufti Sahib tenders to illustrate his statement, it appears that the word 'proper' should have been used by the translator. What the Mufti Sahib says is that it is not proper for even a Sahaabi to classify as an innovation an action which is proven on the basis of the Qur'aan and Ahaadeeth. This line of argument is ludicrous.

There is no Sahaabi who ever branded any such proven act or teaching of the Shariah as innovation. It is quite probable that a Sahaabi was unaware of something which another Sahaabi attributed to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), and on the basis of his unawareness he may have labelled the act bid'ah. Giving an example of his contention, the Mufti Sahib says: *"Similarly Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal (Radhiyallahu anhu) has said that to recite Bismillah aloud in Salaah is an innovation, but this very act is Sunnah to Imaam Shafi'ee (Rahmatullah alayh)."*

This is an extremely poor example proffered for the grave and ludicrous charge of a Sahaabi possibly having labelled as bid'ah an act which is proven by the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. The Mufti Sahib has made this contention in a weird attempt to show that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's prevention and expulsion of the group of bid'ati thaakireen were in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith in view of the fact that these two primary sources of the Shariah ordain, exhort and emphasise the importance and significance of Thikrullaah. This attempt is untenable in terms of the principles of the Shariah. It is also despicable and lamentable. There is absolutely no

justification for entertaining such a suspicion with regard to Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) or any other Sahaabi. All the examples of Sahaabah conflicting with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, which the Mufti Sahib presents are highly erroneous and ludicrous.

The action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was not a measure of preventing Thikrullaah. It was an action to prevent and eliminate bid'ah. It is therefore extremely misleading to have even posited this ridiculous hypothesis. Hadhrat Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) did not clash with the Qur'aan or the Sunnah in his view. The Mufti Sahib's insinuation is vile in the extreme. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"All my Sahaabah are just. Whomever of them you follow, you will be guided."*

It is a preposterous misconception to believe that a Sahaabi's ruling could be faulted and discounted on the basis of Imaam Shaafi's view. Despite Imaam Shaafi's contention of the *Sunniyat* of reciting Tasmiah audibly during Salaat, the fatwa of bid'ah issued by the Sahaabi, Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) has precedence and greater validity. Hence, his view is the Math-hab of Imaam Abu Hanifah and of innumerable thousands of Fuqaha, and of the greater segment of the Ummah. The Mufti Sahib in having resorted to this type of confused argument in his quest for evidence to substantiate the collective loud Thikr performances, has belittled the lofty rank of the Sahaabah.

The crime is of an aggravated nature in view of the fact that the Mufti Sahib is a professed Hanafi who is supposed to uphold the Ruling of Imaam A'zam (rahmatullah alayh) based on the explicit pronouncement

of the Sahaabi, Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu). But, veering sharply from the Straight Path, he attempts to dislodge Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal and Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhuma) with the view of Imaam Shaafi (rahmatullah alayh), and with baseless interpretations respectively.

The Sahaabi, Hadhrat Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) cannot be indicted of holding a view in conflict with the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The probability of error is greater in the Shaafi' viewpoint than the view of the Sahaabi. He was fully entitled in holding the view of audible reciting of the Tasmiah in Salaat being bid'ah regardless of the viewpoint of Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh). It is bizarre to insinuate on the basis of Imaam Shaafi's view that the Sahaabi Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) had acted in contravention of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. In fact, Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), on the very basis of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith proves that it is Sunnah to recite Bismillaah silently in Salaat. Each Math-hab has its own respective arguments. A Sahaabi's lofty status entitled him to brand a practice bid'ah even if such practice is valid in the view of other Sahaabah.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has clearly been unable to understand the basis of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mughaffal's pronouncement of bid'ah, and on the basis of this lack of understanding he entertains the idea that this Sahaabi had erred in saying that reciting Bismillah aloud in Salaat is bid'ah. However, the great Akaabir Ulama have not understood the issue in this manner. They accepted and endorsed Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's view. Thus, Allaamah Khalil Ahmad Ambetwi states in

his *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah* in refutation of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah who regard unsubstantiated practices as beautiful (Mustahsan) and even superior (Afdhal): " *The Sahaabi, Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal, labelled as bid'ah and rejected loud recitation of Bismillah together with Surah Faatihah in Salaat inspite of Bismillah being a Thikr, and jahr with Thikr is not prohibited. However, since jahr has not been narrated (in the Hadith) at this juncture (of Surah Faatihah during Salaat), he branded it bid'ah. This Hadith is narrated in Tirmizi and other Hadith kutub. According to Imaam Abu Hanifah, reciting Takbeer aloud along the route to the Eidgah on the Day of Fitr is bid'ah because according to him silent recitation of the Takbir is substantiated at this juncture. Hence jahr (reciting aloud) at a juncture unsubstantiated by the Shariah is bid'ah despite jahr with Takbeer and Thikr being mustahsan."*

Elaborating on the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu), it appears in *I'laaus Sunan:* "The Hadith indicates that abstention from *jahr* with Bismillah according to them (the great body of Sahaabah and Taabieen) was the inheritance from their Nabi, which their later generations inherited from those before them. This by itself is sufficient for this mas'alah…."

The venerable Mufti Sahib has not conducted himself honourably in citing the statement of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu), He has attempted to convey the impression of this being an isolated view (i.e. reciting Bismillaah aloud before Surah Faatihah is bid'ah) of a Sahaabi being in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. Hence, he presented Ibn Mughaffal's

proclamation of bid'ah as an issue devoid of substance which is unsustainable.

This attempt is a grave injustice committed by the Mufti Sahib. In view of this misrepresentation, there is a need to present some elucidation on this mas'alah so that Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's statement is viewed and understood in proper perspective.

The full text of the Hadith is: *"Ibn Abdullah Bin Mughaffal narrated: 'While I was in Salaat, my father heard me reciting 'Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem'. He then exclaimed: 'O my son! 'You are innovating. Beware of bid'ah!' He (Abdullah) said: 'I have not seen any of the Ashaab of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) abhorring innovation in Islam more than him (my father).' He said: 'I have performed Salaat with Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), with Abu Bakr, Umar and with Uthmaan, but I had not heard anyone of them saying it (i.e. reciting Bismillaah audibly). Therefore, do not say it. When you perform Salaat, then say: 'Alhamdulillaah Rabbil Aalameen.' "*

Ikramah narrated from Ibn Abbaas who said regarding reciting Bismillaah aloud: 'That is the act of the A'raab' (the simple and ignorant village dwellers).' Tahaawi narrated it, and its Isnaad is Hasan – Aathaarus Sunan (I'laaus Sunan)

Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) had proclaimed this act bid'ah on the basis of strong *dalaa-il.* It was not an isolated, weak view of an unknown Sahaabi. It is highly improper for the Mufti Sahib to attempt to dismiss Ibn Mughaffal's bid'ah proclamation with Imaam Shaafi's view. If according to Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh) reciting Tasmiah audibly is 'Sunnah',

it does not detract from the validity of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's fatwa of bid'ah, and that is the fatwa which is the view of the Ahnaaf, and which should be the view of the venerable Mufti Sahib whom we understand is a follower of the Hanafi Math-hab.

It is 100% correct to follow Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) and hold the bid'ah view notwithstanding Imaam Shaafi's viewpoint. There is an avalanche of authentic and valid *dalaa-il* corroborating the view expressed by Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu). Thus, for the Mufti Sahib to tender Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's fatwa of bid'ah to illustrate his (the Mufti Sahib's) baseless hypothesis, is lamentable. His fallacious hypothesis is: *"When an action is proven from the Glorious Qur'an or Ahaadeeth, then too it is not pernicious for a Sahabi to classify it as an innovation."* Commenting on his own hypothesis, the Mufti Sahib says: *"From this we learn that an action does not become an innovation merely because a certain Sahaabi classified it as such."*

The error of the Mufti Sahib's conclusion is self-evident. As far as the 'certain Sahaabi' is concerned, he is correct and fully entitled to brand an act bid'ah. He does so on the basis of evidence in his possession. When a Sahaabi brands an act a bid'ah, he does not suck it out of his thumb. His fatwa is based on his knowledge of the mas'alah as he had acquired it from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The question of promoting and perpetuating his fatwa was the task of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen to whom we, the Muqallideen submit. The Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were the authorities to research all the proofs and issue the final verdict which we have to

incumbently accept. Since the view of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) has been upheld by the Aimmah Mujtahideen of the Hanafi Math-hab on the basis of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, it was a gross and manifest error for the venerable Mufti Sahib to present the bid'ah classification of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) to illustrate his untenable hypothesis.

The Sahaabi's classification to which the Aimmah Mujtahideen and Fuqaha of the Ahnaaf subscribe, may not be challenged and derogated by a Hanafi Mufti citing as his *daleel* the view of Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh).

The other examples which the Mufti Sahib presented to substantiate his hypothesis also suffer the same fate as his misconceived illustration with the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu). In another similar misconceived example to denigrate the classification of a Sahaabi, the Mufti Sahib says: *"For example, Hazrat Ibn Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) said that Salaatut Dhuhaa is an innovation, whereas it is infact Mustahab."* In terms of the Mufti Sahib's baseless hypothesis, the logic here is: There is consensus that Salaatut Dhuhaa is Sunnat/Mustahab. Despite this, the Sahaabi Abdullah Bin Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) classified it as bid'ah. The inference to be drawn from this line of reasoning is: An act is not bid'ah merely because a Sahaabi branded it bid'ah. The conclusion: Thus, Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Masood's classification of the group of thaakireen as being innovators is incorrect. Their act of loud collective Thikr in the Musjid is not bid'ah despite Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's classification and his action of expelling them from the Musjid.

This conclusion extrapolated on the basis of the postulation of the Mufti Sahib is baseless since it is raised on a baseless postulate, which is his hypothesis mentioned above. Let us revert to the Salaatut Dhuhaa issue. It is inconceivable for a Sahaabi, especially a Sahaabi of the calibre of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar, to classify a practice of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) as bid'ah and to prevent others from practising such an established well-substantiated Sunnah.

While the Mufti Sahib has attempted to show the 'error' of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar's bid'ah classification, the Akaabireen had a different view. In fact they cited Hadhrat Ibn Umar's classification in refutation of the bid'ah of the Ahl-e-Bareilwis. Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil Ahmad Ambethwi states in his *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah:*

"It is in Bukhaari that Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) seeing people performing Salaatut Dhuhaa in the Musjid, said that this is bid'ah wheras Salaatut Dhuha is Sunnat and Mustahab, and going to the Musjid is also Mustahab. But, because this Salaat was not to be performed collectively in the Musjid, he branded it bid'ah, and he refuted it."

It is significant that Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil presented Hadhrat Ibn Umar's action in refutation of bid'ah whereas the venerable Mufti Sahib portrays it as an error – the error of classifying a Sunnat as innovation. This is indeed a misrepresentation of the action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu). When he saw the prominence which was being accorded to a Salaat which everyone had to perform in the privacy of the home, he feared it developing into a bid'ah. Hence,

nipping the feared accretion in the bud, he outrightly branded their performance as bid'ah. While the Mufti Sahib appears to be the first person to depict this action as well as the action of other Sahaabah as isolated and erroneous acts in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, the authorities of the Shariah in all ages upheld these classifications by the Sahaabah and provided appropriate interpretations. But, in view of the Mufti Sahib's desperate quest for 'dalaa-il' to bolster the current loud collective Thikr performances in the Musaajid, he felt constrained to derogate even the fataawa of senior Sahaabah.

Another bizarre example which the Mufti Sahib produces to illustrate the imagined conflict of a Sahaabi with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, is his statement: *"In a similar manner, Hazrat Abu Malik Ashja'i (Radhiyallahu anhu) says that according to his father, to recite Qunoot in the Fajr Salaah is an innovation. This is also a Sunnah act according to Imaam Shaafi'ee (Rahmatullah alaihi)."*

It may be a Sunnat act for the Shaafi's. It is not a Sunnat act for the Ahnaaf. The Sahaabi who maintained that it is Bid'ah, possessed the requisite entitlement to have issued his fatwa of bid'ah. It is therefore despicable to present this Sahaabi's view in the bizarre attempt to illustrate the fallacious theory of a Sahaabi's view being in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. The views of the Sahaabah are all based on valid Shar'i *dalaa-il.* Their views were not products of their whimsical imagination.

Underlying the presentation of such erroneous examples is the motive to illustrate the bizarre inference that Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood's prevention and expulsion of the group of thaakireen was in conflict with

the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, hence improper, and not worthy of emulation. This line of reasoning is absolutely absurd from the Shar'i point of view.

There is not a semblance of conflict between the action of Hadhrat Ibn Masood (radhiyallahu anhu) and the Qur'aan Majeed nor with any Hadith whatsoever. In fact, his action was fully in consonance with Rasulullah's numerous commands stated in condemnation of bid'ah.

It should be well understood that a bid'ah can be constituted of several perfectly lawful acts of ibaadat. These acts taken individually will be highly meritorious. However, when given a collective form, the ruling applicable to the accumulation or to the whole new act will differ. Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil Ahmad states in *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah:*

"If the form of the collective action is haraam, then the ruling pertaining to the collection (of acts) will change even if all the individual acts are permissible."

In the loud collective Thikr performances, the following acts are all permissible if done individually:
Thikrullaah, moderate jahr in privacy, non-Sunnah athkaar prescribed by the Mashaaikh. and Tilaawat of the Qur'aan. However, if these acts are combined in a collective form in a public performance in the Musjid, then the whole collection will be classified as bid'ah in the same way as Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had branded the loud collective Thikr performance in the Musjid bid'ah, and in the way Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) classified the public performance of Salaatut Dhuhaa as bid'ah.

The venerable Mufti Sahib does concede the need "to prevent the door of innovation from being open". The criticism directed to the loud collective Thikr displays in the Musjid is precisely for this purpose – to prevent the door of bid'ah opening up. All such public performances unsubstantiated by the Sunnah ultimately develop into entrenched acts of bid'ah. This was the error of the Ahl-e-Bareilwi, and our Deobandi molvis of this era are now emulating that dangerous example.

DEFINING BID'AH

Defining *Bid'ah*, the venerable Mufti Sahib says:

"According to Allamah Shaami (Rahmatullah alaih) and Allamah Ibn Nujaim (Rahmatullah alaih), an innovation is a new act which is derived from the teachings or actions of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)."

This definition is incorrect. An act derived from the teachings or action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is Sunnah, not bid'ah. Further explaining bid'ah, the Mufti Sahib correctly observes: "...to increase the status of any Mustahab or permissible act by regarding it as compulsory is innovation."

All new forms of collective rituals given the outer form of ibaadat ultimately degenerate into entrenched bid'ah. That is why the Sahaabah were ever diligent in this observation. They did not allow any permissible act to develop into an entrenched bid'ah. They nipped the evil octopus in the bud. Hence, we find Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) ordering that the tree (which is even mentioned in the Qur'aan) under which the Sahaabah pledged allegiance, be cut down. With the deep *nooraani* foresight which Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) possessed, he foresaw that if the tree was retained, it would graduate from its status of blessedness to veneration and ultimately become an idol of worship or at least a venue of considerable bid'ah. Hence he ordered it to be eliminated.

In the same way, Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Umar, castigated the public performance of Salaatut Dhuhaa. Similarly, did Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) nip in the bud a developing bid'ah.

He thus expelled the participants of loud collective Thikr from the Musjid.

The Mufti Sahib concedes that to elevate the status of a Mustahab or of a permissible act and conferring to it incumbency is bid'ah. This is exactly the position with all new acts and practices which are practised collectively in the Musaajid and public places. These practices are initiated sincerely with good intentions. Initially they are not regarded as compulsory. However, as time progresses, these non-Sunnah practices become entrenched customs. After some time they are regarded compulsory. Those who do not participate in such customs are criticized and ridiculed. At that stage when the Ulama-e-Haqq criticize the innovations, the perpetrators react in the way in which we find the Qabar Pujaari (Grave-Worshippers) reacting when they are admonished for their bid'aat.

We now see this same attitude creeping into those associated with the Ulama of Deoband. It is for this reason that the venerable Mufti Sahib is taking umbrage and desperately vindicating the loud collective Thikr public performances. His concern for these unsubstantiated practices has constrained him to go to the abominable extent of demoting the unanimously proclaimed superiority of silent Thikr, and elevating the permissible form of audible Thikr to the status of *afdhaliyyat*. Soon this bid'ah will degenerate further into the belief of *wujoob*.

When the Sahaabah diligently clamped down on the slightest innovation for fear of it becoming an entrenched bid'ah in the future, and nipped any developing accretion in the bud, despite that age being the best of ages, what

constrains the venerable Mufti Sahib to go overboard in his defence of an unsubstantiated practice which has no origin in the Sunnah and in which bid'ah is latent?

Bid'ah, shirk and kufr are rife in this age. Bid'ah has distorted and contaminated the Deen. Bid'ah customs are rife, and according to the venerable Mufti Sahib, the people's hearts in this age are hardened and incorrigible. Add to this the disappearance of the true Khaanqah and the endemic ignorance of Muslims. In this critically diseased condition of the people, the venerable Mufti Sahib, instead of emulating diligently the example of the Sahaabah, desperately slogs to promote unsubstantiated practices which have all the potential of developing into entrenched acts of bid'ah. Instead of encouraging people towards the Sunnah practices of ibaadat, the Mufti Sahib incorrectly portrays these unsubstantiated acts in a manner which conveys the idea to the uninitiated, unwary and ignorant that these loud collective Thikr practices are the actual way of ibaadat. Therefore it is seen that the adherents of these unsubstantiated practices accord greater importance and observance to such Thikr practices than to the Masnoon acts of Tahyatul Wudhu, Awwaabeen, Tahajjud, Tilaawat, responding to the Athaan, etc.

The attitude of the *mubtadieen thaakireen* with regard to the loud collective Thikr enacted as public performances, convinces one that their invented Thikr practices have greater importance than the Waajib and Sunnat acts of ibaadat. The venerable Mufti Sahib is dwelling in a massive deception if he believes that these loud collective Thikr customs have not as yet penetrated deeply into the domain of bid'ah.

The Mufti Sahib says: *"Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) has said: 'Whoever introduces something new to this religion, it is rejected.' From this we learn that to introduce new things to this religion is also an innovation."*

This hadith brings the new loud collective public Thikr performances fully within its scope. This Hadith is among the fundamental evidences for the prohibition of bid'ah. The collective Thikr programmes are accretions – new introductions *into* the Deen. They are gradually being promoted as part and parcel of the Deen. 99% of the Muslim community consists of the uninitiated, unwary and ignorant. There is a massive chasm between the masses and the Sunnah. When the masses observe the chanters in *halqah* form swaying from side to side in a mock portrayal of ecstasy and simulated trance, it generates a variety of ideas, theories and reactions in their minds.

The ignorant ones who are unable to even perform Salaat correctly and whose awareness of the basic masaa-il of Tahaarat is extremely deficient, do not and cannot comment. They simply assume that the participants in the *halqahs* are knowledgeable men of lofty piety and spiritual strata. The children frequenting the Musaajid also acquire a similar notion. With the progress of time, a concept of Sunnah is interwoven around these so-called 'mystical' rituals. This is the state of the halqahs of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah in India, Pakistan, North and West Africa., and elsewhere.

These halqas and tariqas have not only emaciated Tasawwuf – the original Tasawwuf which is an integral

and fundamental constituent of the Deen, they have submitted Islam to a process of total metamorphosis and transformed it into what they term 'Suf'ism'. And, the pillar of their brand of sufi'ism is jumping, chanting, dancing in whirwind fashion which propels the dancers and singers into the stratosphere of satanic realms of 'ecstasy'. This is their religion of *wajd* – the religion whose primary act of 'ibaadat' is the dervish dance in which Iblees is the chief instructor and co-ordinator.

The sufi'ism of all these baatil tariqas began with mild and seemingly innocent acts of 'ibaadat' – unsubstantiated by the Sunnah – acts such as the loud collective Thikr public performances which the honourable Mufti Sahib is feverishly vindicating without displaying the foresight which an Aalim of Haqq is supposed to possesses.

The bid'ah of meelaad which has become firmly entrenched in the Qabar Pujaari sect (the Bareilwis) had its beginnings in *Mubah* (permissible) moulood practices which true and sincere devotees of Allah Ta'ala practised. Their *Mubah* moulood was totally bereft of the slightest vestige of bid'ah. In fact the *Mubah* moulood such as that practised by Haji Imdaadullah (rahmatullah alayh) could be classified in the category of *'Ahkaam'* created by the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib who says in this regard: "These activities were not practiced upon by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) but are not prohibited; rather it is highly desirable to practice upon some of them."

All these 'highly desirable practices' which the imagination has spawned without considering the Sunnah and blissfully unaware of the far-reaching evil

consequences, ultimately develop into hardcore, entrenched bid'ah rituals. It is for this reason that Hadhrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (rahmatullah alayh) would dissociate from even the *Mubah* moulood practice of his illustrious Shaikh, Hadhrat Haji Imdaadullah (rahmatullah alayh).

There is much admonition of the Akaabir, which could be presented regarding the undesirability of the 'highly desirable' practices which the Mufti Sahib has postulated in his endeavour to justify the bid'ah of the public performances of loud collective Thikr. In this regard, the following salutary principle stated by Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil Ambethwi (rahmatullah alayh) should be borne in mind when deciding the issue of the 'highly desirable' permissible practices advocated by the Mufti Sahib. Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil Ahmed says in his *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah:*

"A Mubah (permissible) act, in fact a Mandoob (Mustahab/Sunnat) act becomes bid'ah and unlawful because of iltizaam (making it incumbent), hence even the Ta-aamul (regular practice) of the Mutaqaddimeen (on the Mubah/Mandoob) act is not hujjat (proof)."

Mubah Thikr practices given the form of collective ibaadat, which are unsubstantiated in the Sunnah, ultimately develop into bid'ah, hence even the *Ta-aamul* of the pious predecessors who had maintained the practices within the prescribed limits of the Shariah, will not be regarded as *hujjat* to justify the bid'ah into which the *mubah* or *Mandoob* practice has developed. In terms of this sagacious principle, even the valid and permissible practices of the khaanqah may not be cited as *daleel* for collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid, because the foregone outcome of such practices is bid'ah.

RASULULLAH'S ABSTENTION

The Mufti Sahib avers: *"The jurists have drawn out four proofs for the establishment of any law or command, i.e. the Blessed Qur'an, the Ahaadeeth of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), the consensus of the scholars and logic. For the prohibition of any deed these four proofs also apply. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)'s omitting any deed is not a fifth proof according to the jurists. A few examples of those actions which were not practiced upon by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alayihi wasallam) are:*

- *The consumption of lizards*
- *The performance of two rakaats Salaah before Maghrib Salaah*
- *The extension of the Ka'bah*
- *The fast of Dawood (Alaihas Salaam) (to fast on alternate days).*

These actions were not practiced upon by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) but they are not prohibited; rather it is highly desirable to practice upon some of them."

The 'delicacy' of Lizards?

We do not know according to which of the Four Math-habs of the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah it is 'highly desirable' to consume lizards. Eating lizards is haraam. If eating lizards is perhaps permissible in another Math-hab, its consumption can most certainly not become 'highly desirable' for followers of the Hanafi Math-hab and for those of other Math-habs which do not permit eating reptiles. In fact, it will not be incorrect to say that eating

lizards will not be 'highly desirable' for even those whose Math-hab permits consumption of such creatures.

What is the factor which elevates eating lizards to the status of 'highly desirable'? Also, what is the Mufti Sahib's Shar'i concept of 'highly desirable'? We are discussing issues of the Shariah. We can therefore infer that the minimum category to which 'highly desirable' is to be assigned is *Istihbaab* (being Mustahab). But for an act to be Mustahab it is in need of a *daleel* in the Ahaadith. When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) neither consumed lizards nor exhorted its consumption, then on what basis will lizard-consumption become Mustahab or 'highly desirable'?

Now even if according to the Maaliki Math-hab it is permissible to consume lizards, worms, beetles and non-poisonous snakes, it will be ludicrous for the venerable Mufti Sahib to exhort the followers of the other Math-habs, especially Hanafis, to eat such abominable creatures on the basis of his theory of 'high desirability' – *Mustahab? Mustahsan?*

If the Mufti Sahib had, in devotion and over-brimming love for Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ventured to say that it is highly desirable to consume marrow (a kind of pumpkin), then this view would have been respected, honoured and accepted despite it being classified as a *Sunnat-e-Aadiyyah*, the observance of which is not emphasised nor discardence deprecated. However, since Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) loved marrow, there is considerable wisdom in exhorting Muslims to consume this vegetable. But eating reptiles, lizards, worms and snakes? *Mustahab and highly desirable?*

The nausea which is generated by visualising ingestion of *khabaa-ith* is more than adequate to effectively eliminate any figment of 'high desirability of eating lizards'. There is evidently something amiss in the honourable Mufti Sahib's logic.

Two Raka'ts Nafl

The Mufti Sahib's logic which has promoted the two raka'ts Nafl before Maghrib to the status of 'highly desirable' is peculiar. Among the Authorities of the Mathaa-hib, these two raka'ts vacillate between permissibility and bid'ah. Such an act cannot be described as being 'highly desirable', especially for Hanafis in whose Math-hab there is no scope for these two raka'ts being 'highly desirable.'

Let us examine a brief synopsis of these two raka'ts. The views of the Mathaa-hib on this issue are:

The Hanafi and Maaliki Math-habs do not entertain this Salaat. In fact, according to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) these two raka'ts are Makrooh. It is generally said that in this context, Makrooh refers to Makrooh Tanzihi. Nevertheless, it is still Makrooh, and not advocated. It is exceptionally far from being 'highly desirable'.

Imaam Ahmad Bin Hambal (rahmatullah alayh) said that it is permissible. There are different views of Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh) regarding these two raka'ts. In Sharhul Muhazzab, Imaam Nawawi (rahmatullah alayh) says that it is Mustahab. However, in Sharhul Muslim he states that the prominent view is that it is not Mustahab. The view of Imaam Abu Hanifah and Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayhima) is followed by

innumerable Ulama and Auliya among the Salaf-e-Saaliheen.

In view of such a huge difference of opinion among the Authorities of the Shariah and a classification between permissibility and Makrooh, it does not behove the venerable Mufti Sahib to predicate the classification of 'highly desirable' for these two raka'ts. The venerable Mufti Sahib being a follower of the Hanafi Math-hab, has further erred grievously by proclaiming this Salaat to be highly desirable when it is a Makrooh practice according to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh). In so doing, he is inviting laxity in Taqleed of the Math-hab.

In this era of *admut taqleed* and exceptionally slack ties with the Shariah, it is irresponsible to issue advices which conflict with the Math-hab one follows. It is palpably erroneous to claim that *"it is highly desirable to practice on some of them."* Thus, the high desirability predicated for lizard consumption and the two raka'ts before Maghrib is manifestly fallacious.

Extending the Ka'bah

As far as extending the Ka'bah is concerned, whether it is 'highly desirable' or not, has absolutely no relationship with the issue of bid'ah. It is also necessary for the honourable Mufti Sahib to define his concept of Ka'bah extension. What exactly is meant by the extension of the Ka'bah? Extending the Ka'bah is simply not permissible. When Hadhrat Ibraaheem (alayhis salaam) rebuilt the Ka'bah, it was on the original foundations indicated by Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam). The Ka'bah as it stands today is structured on the very foundations erected by Hadhrat Aadam (alayhis salaam). The foundations of the

Ka'bah includes the section known as the Hateem. There exists Ijma' of the Ummah on the prohibition of altering the Ka'bah despite the fact that the entire foundations are not included in the Ka'bah-structure.

The full perimeter of the foundations has to be incumbently encompassed by the Tawaaf. The issue of the foundations on which rests the semi-walls of the Hateem was firmly and finally clinched more than thirteen centuries ago. The structure as it has stood from the time of its construction during the era of Hajjaaj, may not be altered.

While Musjidul Haraam may be extended – and such extensions were many over the centuries – the Ka'bah itself may not be extended. It is therefore certainly not 'highly desirable' to extend the Ka'bah.

Siyaam-e-Daawood (alayhis salaam)

With regard to *Siyaam-e-Daawood (alayhis salaam)* – the Fasting pattern of Nabi Daawood (alayhis salaam) – it is permissible and meritorious just as *Siyaamud Dahr* (Fasting perpetually all year round) is permissible and meritorious for those who have the physical ability. This is not an issue related to our discussion and dispute.

In order to confer credibility on his theory of Rasulullah's abstention from acts, the venerable Mufti Sahib has cited the aforementioned examples which are total misfits in the context of his principle which is stated by him as: *"Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)'s omitting any deed is not a fifth proof according to the jurists."* No one has contended that there is such a 'proof' in the Shariah. However, Rasulullah's abstention from acts may not be ignored in entirety.

Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's action was based on *bid'ah fid-Deen* (innovating a practice into the Deen and presenting it as an integral part of the Deen). That such an act – or bid'ah – which is *fid-deen* (innovation into the Deen), was an act from which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained, is simply an automatic axiom or a necessary corollary stemming from the very concept of bid'ah. All acts of bid'ah are accretions into the Deen, and Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained from all such misdeeds. The Mufti Sahib's prattle about an imaginary 'fifth' principle is a diversion for lack of *dalaa-il.*

By the same token of the Mufti Sahib's theory, it is also erroneous to argue that all acts from which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) abstained are permissible. Adding another two raka'ts to the Fajr Salaat for example will be bid'ah and haraam. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had taught the details of Salaat. He had abstained from more than two raka'ts. Such abstention is thus a valid argument for the critics of bid'ah.

The Sahaabah had, on the very basis of Rasulullah's abstention, prohibited accretions despite the permissibility of the individual acts of Ibaadat. Thus, Salaatud Dhuhaa if performed by groups ostentatiously in the Musjid was prohibited by Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu), and so was the loud collective Thikr banned by Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) labelled the audible recitation of Tasmiah in Salaat as bid'ah on the basis of Rasulullah's abstention. Another Sahaabi

described the recitation of Qunoot in Fajr as bid'ah on the basis of his knowledge of Rasulullah's abstention. The views of Imaam Shaafi' may not be cited in refutation of the valid proclamations of the Sahaabah. All the authorities of the Shariah, including our immediate Akaabireen, utilize these very proclamations of the Sahaabah in their fight against bid'ah.

The Fuqaha have labelled as bid'ah the audible recitation of Takbeer, and Tahleel during the *Tarweehaat* of Taraaweeh Salaat on the basis of the abstention of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) denounced the recitation of Durood Shareef after the *Tahmeed* of sneezing, and based his criticism on the basis of Rasulullah's abstention. Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Zubair (radhiyallahu anhu) reprimanded a man who had lifted his hands during the dua in the Qa'dah of Salaat. He based his fatwa on Rasulullah's abstention.

The Sahaabah condemned a man who had organized a feast to celebrate the circumcision of his child. They tendered as the basis of their criticism the 'principle' of abstention.

Ijtimaai' (collective) dua (also known as Faatiha-e-Thaani) after the Sunnat and Nafl Salaat has been branded bid'ah by the Ulama on the basis of abstention by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah.

It is incorrect to posit the 'abstention of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)' as a non-existing 'proof'. No one has even tried to project such abstention as a fifth *Daleel* of the Shariah. But the fact remains that

commission of such abstentions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which result in a transformation, displacement or abrogation of any law of the Shariah, or an accretion into the Deen, is haraam and bid'ah. Any accretion in ibaadat form which has the potential of bringing about change in the original acts of Ibaadat will be bid'ah and the need to prohibit it is imperative. This is precisely the manner in which the Sahaabah confronted all new accretions in the sphere of ibaadat.

Affirming Rasulullah's abstention as valid grounds for prohibition, Hadhrat Ali (radhiyallahu anhu) severely reprimanding a man who was about to perform Nafl Salaat in the Eidgah, said: *"I am certainly aware that Allah Ta'ala does not reward for any act (of ibaadat) which was not done by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) nor exhorted by him. This Salaat of yours is futile, and futility is haraam. Perhaps Allah Ta'ala will punish you for its perpetration because of your conflict with his Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)."* – *Majaalisul Abraar*

Regardless of the existence of a 'fifth' daleel – the 'daleel of abstention' – or of its non-existence, Rasulullah's abstention has application in the sphere of Abstention. Now which abstention will be bid'ah if committed and which abstention will be lawful? For this comprehension an *Aql* embellished with *Noor-e-Fahm,* and *Ilm* infused with *Noor* heralding from Allah Ta'ala and settling in the breast of the Aalim are essential requisites. As for souls such as us lacking in these transcendental attributes, the safest course in the turmoils of nafsaaniyat and shaitaaniyat which drive us along, is rigid Taqleed of Imaam A'zam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah

alayh). He who clings to the sacred Mantle of the Imaam, will, Insha'Allah, not stray into deviation and spiritual destruction.

This issue has no relationship with consuming lizards or abstaining from consumption of worms and snakes. Bid'ah – Bid'ah Sayyiah (evil bid'ah) – applies to the domain of Ibaadat, not to worldly matters which do not lead to any conflict with the teachings or spirit of the Deen.

It is not suggested that every abstention of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has to be followed and if not followed will be bid'ah as the manner of the Mufti Sahib's postulation of abstention conveys. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not give the Athaan nor did he perform the ghusl of a mayyit. Such abstention from even acts of ibaadat are not cited as *daleel* for abstention by others. Despite Rasulullah's abstention, certain acts are compulsory acts of ibaadat. On the other hand, there are such abstentions which, if violated or ignored, will constitute bid'ah. For example, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) abstained from performing Salaatudh Dhuhaa in jamaa't; there was abstention from Athaan and Iqaamah for Eid Salaat; he abstained from adding a fourth raka't to the three raka'ts of Maghrib; he abstained from making four raka'ts for Fajr; he abstained from collective dua after the Sunnats and Nafl Salaat; he abstained from making Dua after Janaazah Salaat; and he abstained from many other acts.

So while it will not be bid'ah to consume buffalo meat despite Rasulullah's abstention, it will be a dark bid'ah to commit any act of ibaadat from which Rasulullah

(sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah abstained, not only abstained, but prohibited, e.g. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's prohibition of loud collective Thikr in the Musjid. If the commission of an act from which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained, is given the form of an ibaadat, then it comes within the scope of Rasulullah's stricture:

"An act introduced into this Deen of ours, which is not of it, is rejected (and accursed)."

Thus, if in the Maaliki Math-hab lizards and worms are halaal, and Maalikis consume such creatures, their consumption of these items will not develop into a bid'ah. On the contrary, the type of public performances (the loud collective Thikr and Khatam-e-Khwaajgaan acts) advocated by the venerable Mufti Sahib and other molvis who are sliding into the quagmire of bid'ah, will most assuredly develop into entrenched acts of dark bid'ah. These public performances are portrayed with the hues of ibaadat which to the uninitiated, unwary and ignorant masses will appear as acts of Ibaadat ordered by the Shariah.

In the endeavour to show that the loud collective Thikr performances in the public are not innovations into the Deen, the Mufti Sahib says: *"Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'Whatever Allah Ta'ala has permitted in the Qur'an is Halaal' and whatever He has forbidden is Haraam; and whatever He has remained silent about is overlooked.' From this we come to know that those deeds regarding which the Sharee'ah has remained silent about is overlooked and will only be an innovation when it is regarded as being part of the Sharee'ah. It is for this very reason that the Ulama of*

Deoband have prohibited the customs held after the death of a person."

Precisely for the same reason do we say that the loud collective Thikr customs organized in the Musaajid are bid'ah. Such practices are being regarded as part of the Shariah. The Mufti Sahib is arguing precisely in the way the Ahl-e-Bareilwi bid'atis argue when defending their unauthorized 'ibaadat' practices which the Ulama-e-Haqq brand as bid'ah. If collective tilaawat of the Qur'aan Shareef on the third day or seventh day after the death of a person is a bid'ah custom, then what is the difference between this bid'ah and the loud collective Thikr programmes which are being incumbently practised in the Musaajid?

In fact, a sufi sheikh sahib sends his agents around the country to rope in unwary and ignorant people for organizing such Thikr customs in the Musaajid. He treads the path of the Bareilwi Qabar Pujaaris.

If a Bareilwi practises a custom which has been promoted to the status of incumbent ibaadat or the idea of incumbency is conveyed, then we say that it is Bid'ah. Why should we not pass the same ruling if the perpetrator happens to be a Deobandi? When the evil garland of bid'ah is donned, the Deobandi designation vanishes automatically. A bid'ati cannot be a Deobandi regardless of him having acquired any knowledge at an institution affiliated with the Deobandi School.

The Mufti Sahib's condonation of the new loud collective Thikr custom is just as 'valid' as the Bareilwi Bid'ati's defence of moulood, urs, and their khatam ceremonies. This type of 'validity' is the hallmark of confused thinking which in turn is the effect of

divergence from the Sunnah. Collective loud Thikr practices are divergence from the Sunnah. These are customs which are in conflict with the Sunnah. There is no doubt in the bid'ah of these public displays of 'ibaadat'.

Benefits

The Mufti Sahib's attempt to justify the new practices by presenting the 'benefits' is a baseless exercise which is unworthy of a man of Knowledge. Everything in this dunya has benefits as well as harms – advantages and disadvantages. The indictment here is one of bid'ah. It is unrelated to the benefits. The benefits are of no concern in this area. While acknowledging the benefits, it has to be unequivocally maintained that loud collective Thikr in the public is bid'ah. Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) understood the 'benefits' better than our understanding and the Mufti's understanding of the 'benefits'. However, notwithstanding the 'benefits' he expelled the group of bid'atis from the Musjid.

Loud Takbeer

The Mufti Sahib in a further flabby, in fact baseless attempt to justify the new bid'ah of loud collective Thikr in the public, says: *"When Hazrat Abu Hurairah (Radhiyallahu anhu) and Hazrat Ibn Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) went about the bazaars reciting Takbeer in a loud voice during the days of Haj, it was not regarded as an innovation because they did not regard this as being part of the Sharee'ah"*

The venerable Mufti Sahib has now descended to the level of a layman. It does not behove a man of Ilm to

extravasate from Ahaadith such rulings of whimsical fancy for condoning his personal acts of innovation when such rulings of personal opinion diametrically clash with the standing ruling of the Math-hab he purports to follow and espouse. It is essential for the venerable Mufti Sahib to understand that his style of intellectual quibbling, in which he resorts directly to the Ahaadith for substantiation of the loud collective Thikr custom, evinces a conflict with the official Ruling of the Math-hab he purports to be following, namely, the Hanafi Math-hab.

It is of vital importance that the honourable Mufti Sahib being a Muqallid of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), understands that the ceiling of his quest for *Dalaa-il* for any practice should be the proofs and rulings of the Hanafi Math-hab. If the Hanafi Math-hab has issued a ruling on a mas'alah and such ruling happens to be the accepted view of the *Jamhoor Ahnaaf Fuqaha,* then the Mufti Sahib will be in grievous error to produce Ahaadith or to cite another Mujtahid Imaam to dislodge the official Ruling of the Math-hab.

Bearing this in mind, the Mufti Sahib is aware that according to the Hanafi Math-hab it is not permissible to wander around the bazaars loudly proclaiming Takbeer on Eid days or on any other day. Imaam Abu Hanifah's fatwa on this issue is unequivocal. The Mufti Sahib is also aware that the rulings of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) are based on the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, hence there is no question of conflict with the Sunnah.

There are numerous Ahaadith seemingly conflicting on a mas'alah. The different Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen

have based their respective views on the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. The question of bid'ah therefore cannot be predicted to any of their views.

Now when the Mufti Sahib is aware of the view of the Hanafi Math-hab pertaining to the loud recitation of the Takbeer on the Days of Tashreeq, namely that the Takbeer is recited aloud only once after every Fardh Salaat and audibly on the way to the Musalla (Eid Gah) only on the occasion of Eidul Adha, then he has absolutely no entitlement to cite the Hadith in which the *amal* of Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) is described. If another Imaam has utilized this Hadith as the basis of his view, he (the Mujtahid Imaam) had that right. But, in this belated epoch, a muqallid Mufti has no right to present a Hadith to support his personal view which conflicts with the Math-hab he follows.

If the Hadith which he has cited is to be accepted as a valid basis of his loud collective Thikr programmes, then by the same token the Hadith will be valid to dislodge the view of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) on his view of prohibition of loud Takbeer in the bazaars.

The honourable Mufti Sahib would have acquitted himself honourably if he had operated within the ambit of the principles and rulings of the Ahnaaf Fuqaha instead of trespassing the limits of the Math-hab to fish for proofs in the Ahaadith for which the Muqallid Mufti lacks the credentials and qualifications, especially when his whimsical opinion clashes with the Dalaa-il and Ruling of his Mujtahid Imaam – Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) in this case.

Furthermore, the question of bid'ah does not apply to the actions of Sahaabah, especially senior Sahaabah – Ulama Sahaabah – of the calibre of Hadhrat Abu Hurairah and Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhuma). The actions of the Sahaabah constitute valid basis for formulation of Ahkaam. Their actions are synonymous with the Sunnah. Their actions are the practical tafseer of the teachings of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), hence even if the two aforementioned senior Sahaabah had recited the Takbeer aloud in the bazaars as being part of the Shariah, no one has the right to say that they were practising bid'ah. It is entirely a different issue that the Hanafi Math-hab has overridden this specific *amal* on the basis of Qur'aanic evidence and other Ahaadith. But that methodology of deduction and formulation is the preserve of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

A Muqallid Mufti has no licence for embarking on a similar operation in his quest to substantiate an entirely new practice, alien to the Sunnah, which is adorned with the paraphernalia of bid'ah, and which is most certain to develop into an entrenched bid'ah custom.

On what basis does the Mufti Sahib postulate that Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) did not regard their loud recital of Takbeer as being part of the Shariah? In their opinion, they were executing an act of ibaadat for which they had their *Dalaa-il.* If the Shafi'iyyah and Hanaabilah present this Hadith as evidence for their audible recitation of Takbeer in conflict with the Hanafi Math-hab, we have no dispute with them. Our dispute is with the Muqallid Mufti Sahib who produces a Hadith to bolster his view, and in this process he fails to understand that he is

simultaneously by implication tendering the Hadith to clash with the view of the Imaam whose Muqallid he purportedly is.

While the *amal* of these two Sahaabis is never bid'ah, we, the Muqallideen of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), do not follow this *amal*. We are not in need of any *dalaa-il* to vindicate the *amal* of our Math-hab. Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and the other Hanafi Fuqaha, took well care of that department many, many centuries ago. Thus the Hadith depicting the *amal* of the two Sahaabah is not a basis for arguing permissibility for the loud collective Thikr public performances.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has also displayed a flair for inconsistent and selective citation of Ahaadith. If the Hadith of acertain Sahaabi appears to support his view, he will present it as evidence. But if another Hadith of the same Sahaabi contradicts his opinion, he will relegate it to oblivion. Thus, we observe him presenting the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) pertaining to Takbeer in substantiation of the loud collective Thikr practices. However, Hadhrat Ibn Umar's prohibition of public performance of Salaatudh Dhuha is conveniently ignored.

'Love' and 'Rectification' do not legitimize Bid'ah

The venerable Mufti Sahib has resorted to weird arguments in his zealous endeavour to justify the bid'ah of collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid. Presenting one more sample of this type of untenable arguments, he mentions that "a certain Sahaabi always read Surah Ikhlaas after reciting Surah Faatiha in every Salaah."

When "some people" had complained, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) upheld the Sahaabi's practice. Commenting on this particular Sahaabi's practice, the venerable Mufti Sahib, concludes:

"This narration opens a vast door of valuable knowledge for us, i.e. if we regard any act that was not practiced upon by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as Sunnah then it is innovation; but if we practice on it for the sake of rectification or out of love then it will not be an innovation."

This averment is just as weird as the attempt to substantiate the bid'ah Thikr programme with the abovementioned Hadith. If a practice which is not Sunnah develops into a bid'ah or if there is danger in its becoming a bid'ah, or if its status is elevated to Sunnat or Mustahab, whether by proclamation or attitude, then such practice is not permissible, and this will be the ruling even if the practice is a Mustahab one.

It is surprising that the Mufti Sahib has cited this narration when he is aware or should be aware that it is Makrooh to fix specific Surahs for specific raka'ts or specific Salaats. His 'love' cannot override the ruling of the Math-hab which he purports to follow. A devotee who is in love with a certain valid practice should not venture to issue fatwas. Issuing verdicts on Shar'i issues for the guidance of the masses is the function of a Mufti who is a Faqeeh, not of a Mufti who speaks about 'love', and in the light of such 'love' opens up the avenue for bid'ah.

Commenting on this issue, Hakimul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) said:

"A Mufti should possess qualification in the Qur'aan, Hadith, Fiqah and Tasawwuf. Then, Insha'Allah Ta'ala, he will adhere to the prescribed limits. When he is not fully qualified, then he will surely commit some confusion. Hence, it is not jaa-iz for an aashiq (one who is overwhelmed by divine love) to be a Mufti. Since he is overwhelmed by love, he desires to follow Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in every action regardless of whether such ittiba' (following) will cast others into fitnah. In contrast, a Faqeeh is not concerned with this attitude. He will unhesitatingly proclaim the fatwa that if by following an act of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) there is the danger of corruption for the masses, then such following is in reality not ittiba' of the Sunnah. It is merely a superficial claim of following, hence it will be prohibited."

This exposition presented by Hakimul Ummah pertains to following even acts for which there is a basis in the Sunnah. But for the venerable Mufti Sahib's loud collective Thikr programme, there is no basis in the Sunnah. Such programmes come within the full glare of the Hadith prohibiting bid'ah, namely: *"An innovated act in this Deen of ours, but which is not of it, is rejected (and accursed)."* It is bid'ah sayyiah – an evil bid'ah irrespective of its outward veneer of 'ibaaadat'.

The *Aashiq* is not allowed to be a Mufti because his profound love for Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) overshadows his intelligence and constrains him to proclaim as Waajib even acts of the *Sunnat-e-Aadiyyah* category. But, the venerable Mufti Sahib is not even following the example of an *Aashiq* Mufti, for he (the venerable Mufti Sahib) peddles performances which have

absolutely no truck with the Sunnah. He advocates and promotes a practice which the Sahaabah described as bid'ah.

If the venerable Mufti Sahib had erred on the side of love for Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), he would have promoted some Sunnat – a clear Sunnat, be it of the *Istihbaab* or *Aadiyyah* category. In that case, there would have been extenuating circumstances to mitigate criticism. But, the venerable Mufti Sahib has erred in promoting a practice in which there is not even a vestige of Sunnat which could be attributed to love for the Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

The Mufti Sahib has framed a principle in his aforementioned averment, which has no validity. Rasulullah's abstention from an act does not necessarily negate the Sunnah status of a practice. We have already explained in earlier pages that there are certain acts which are Masnoon – Sunnatul Muakkadah and even Waajib – despite Rasulullah's abstention, (or as the Mufti Sahib says: "not practiced on"). Athaan, ghusl of the mayyit, performing 20 raka'ts Taraaweeh in the exact form as we do today, the second Athaan of Jumuah, and reciting *'As-Salaatu Khairum minan naum'* during the Fajr Athaan are examples of abstention by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Notwithstanding his abstention, these acts are Sunnat. There are other *dalaa-il* which establish the *Sunniyat* of certain acts from which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained. This is not the juncture for such a probe.

On the other hand, some acts become bid'ah despite their Sunnah status. Explaining this, Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) said: "A mubah,

in fact even a Mustahab act sometimes becomes prohibited in view of the accretion of prohibited acts, for example, it is Mustahab, in fact Sunnat, to answer an invitation. However, if any act in conflict with the Shariah will be perpetrated at the venue of the invitation, then it is forbidden to attend." This principle is explained in almost all kutub of Fiqah, and is not hidden from the Ulama.

Despite Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) having upheld the fixation of Surah Ikhlaas in the manner done by the Sahaabi, the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen have ruled that fixing specific Surahs for particular raka'ts or for reciting in specific Salaats is Makrooh. In view of this ruling of our Math-hab, it is incongruous and improper for the Mufti Sahib to present a conflicting Hadith on the basis of which he formulated his 'principle' of "a vast door of valuable knowledge".

Furthermore, this Hadith pertaining to the fixation of a particular Surah during Salaat has no relationship with the innovated collective loud Thikr programme. The recitation of Surah Ikhlaas by the Sahaabi was his personal *amal.* It was not a public performance or a collective display of Thikr by a group in the Musjid.

This Hadith may not be utilized as a basis to innovate practices of personal 'love'. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained from performing four raka'ts for Maghrib. He always performed three raka'ts. Now on the basis of the venerable Mufti's 'principle', namely, *"If we regard an act that was not practiced upon by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as Sunnah then it is an innovation;* ***but if we practice on it for the sake of rectification or out of love then it will not be an***

innovation", if someone adds another raka't to the Maghrib Fardh to make it four raka'ts, and he does so out of 'love' for Salaat or for some sort of 'rectification' as envisaged by the venerable Mufti Sahib, "then it will not be an innovation". But this is manifestly *baatil.*

Similarly, on the basis of his fallacious principle fabricated in this belated age, fourteen centuries after the advent of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, if someone out of 'love' for Dua, adds a dua with hands raised after completion of the Janaazah Salaat, it will be an innovation. According to the Shariah, it is undoubtedly a bid'ah – bid'ah sayyiah notwithstanding the 'love' factor which the venerable Mufti Sahib has introduced for justifying new practices.

The Sahaabi's practice of permanently reciting Surah Ikhlaas in every raka't, is not an innovation. If any Mujtahid Imaam who was satisfied with the authenticity of the Hadith, had presented it as a *daleel* for his view of the permissibility of fixation of Surahs, he would have acted within the ambit of his right to deduct masaa-il on the basis of Saheeh Ahaadith. If such was the Math-hab of any Mujtahid, we will have no dispute with him. But as far as the Muqallideen of Imaam Abu Hanifah are concerned, the other view will be rejected without branding it as bid'ah. But, the Mufti Sahib is not a Mujtahid Imaam. He has no licence to extract a Hadith from the Hadith kutub, and extrapolate *Usool (Principles)* which could be used for abrogating the *Furoo'* masaa-il of the Math-hab he purports to follow.

'Love' for a particular ibaadat is no justification for innovating ibaadat practices. 'Love' will not legitimize even the recitation of Surah Ikhlaas in every Fardh raka't,

as a permanent practice by even an individual performing Salaat in the privacy of his home despite the existence of a precedent in the Sunnah, and despite Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) having praised the Sahaabi for his profound love for this Surah. Such fixation is Makrooh. When 'love' and 'rectification' (the venerable Mufti's principle) are not valid grounds for emulation of even a practice which has a basis in the Sunnah, by what stretch of Shar'i logic and in terms of which principle of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, could it be cited as *daleel* for an innovated practice such as collective loud Thikr which has absolutely no basis in the Sunnah. Instead of having a basis, it has vehement condemnation such as the action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Bid'ah and Sunnah

Explaining the difference between bid'ah and Sunnah, Hakimul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) expounds:

"After the era of Khairul Quroon, the things which have been introduced (and innovated) are of two categories. The one category consists of such acts for which the cause is new, but a Hukm of the Shariah is reliant on it (the new act). Without the new act, it becomes almost impossible to act in accordance with the Hukm of the Shariah. In this category of innovation are the Deeni kutub, Madrasahs and Khaanqahs. These institutions did not exist during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). However, a new cause necessitated the introduction of these institutions for safeguarding the Deen. *(The new cause was the decline in*

the intellectual, moral and spiritual abilities of the people. We have omitted the detailed exposition of Hakimul Ummat on the issue of the 'new cause' for the sake of brevity.)

In view of the need to safeguard the Deen, these institutions were invented. While these institutions are superficially bid'ah, in reality they are not bid'ah (i.e. they are not bid'ah sayyiah). On the contrary, on the basis of the principle, *"The preliminary basis of a Waajib act is also Waajib,* these necessary new institutions are also Waajib.

The second category of new introductions consists of such acts whose cause *(sabab)* is already existent. It is not a new development. Such acts of innovation are, for example, the customary meelaad, the third-day, tenth-day, fortieth-day customs, and many other acts of bid'ah. The cause *(sabab)* for these innovations existed, and is not a new development. For example, the reason for meelaad functions is happiness on account of the birth of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Despite this *sabab* having existed during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), neither did he nor the Sahaabah organize meelaad functions. Did the intelligence of the Sahaabah not comprehend this (i.e. the supposed need for meelaad to express happiness), *Nauthubillaah!*

If this *sabab* (love for Rasulullah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had not existed among the Sahaabah, then it could have been argued that since they lacked love for Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), they did not organize meelaad customs. (Obviously this is not the case).

But when the *sabab* had existed among them, then why did Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah not organize meelaad functions? The Hukm of this class of innovations is bid'ah. It is bid'ah in outward form as well as in its meaning. It comes within the scope of the Hadith: *An act innovated into this Deen of ours, but which is not of it, is rejected (and accursed).* This is the principle on the basis of which bid'ah and Sunnah could be distinguished, and the ruling for all details could be deducted." *End of Hakimul Ummat's exposition.*

If we scale the Mufti Sahib's collective loud Thikr practices on this principle, it will be established that this practice falls in the second category of innovations. The *raison d'etre (sabab)* for Thikr is old *(qadeem).* It is not a new development. It existed par excellence among the Sahaabah. The very motive which underlies Thikrullah in this age, had existed in the age of the Sahaabah. The reason for Thikrullah is to gain the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. This was the very reason for the Thikrullaah of the Sahaabah too, yet they did not organize such loud Thikr programmes. Were they then deficient in this *raison d'etre?* No, never! Thus, the display of devotion and love by means of innovated acts having the form of ibaadat implies that the Sahaabah were deficient in this respect while the innovators (Bid'atis) have surpassed them.

It does the Mufti Sahib no good to try and squeeze proof from Ahaadith which have absolutely no relationship to innovations (bid'ah sayyiah) and which cannever constitute a basis for validity of such acts. The Surah Ikhlaas recitation was a valid practice of a Sahaabi,

upheld and praised by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Notwithstanding this validity, the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen of the Ahnaaf, without branding it bid'ah, did not deem it valid for negating the fatwa of *Karaahat* for the practice of fixing a specific Surah for specific raka'ts or for a particular Salaat.

The Talbiyah and extra words

In a similar endeavour, the Mufti Sahib on account of having misunderstood the narration. misapplies Hadhrat Ibn Umar's recital of some extra words in the Talbiyah. Thus he says: *"It has been reported that Hazrat Ibn Umar (Radiyallahu anhu) used to add a few extra words in the Talbiyah of Haj, This was not done with the intention of Sunnah therefore it was not regarded as an innovation."*

It would have been salubrious if the Mufti Sahib had rather mentioned Hadhrat Ibn Umar's prohibition of Salaatudh Dhuha, for this would throw adequate light on the bid'ah of the collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid. In presenting Hadhrat Ibn Umar's Talbiyah consisting of a 'few extra words', the Mufti Sahib has misdirected himself in that he has negated the *Istihbaab* of the 'extra words'.

Reciting a few extra words in the Talbiyah is in fact also Sunnat. It is a Sunnah of the Mustahab category. The Mufti Sahib has erred regarding the mas'alah in this regard.

The effect of the Mufti Sahib's averment is that if the 'extra words' are recited with the notion that these are Sunnat or Mustahab, then it would be an innovation. This inference is erroneous. The Mufti Sahib has also

attempted to peddle the notion that reciting a few extra words in the Talbiyah was an act peculiar to only Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu). However, he was not the only Sahaabi who recited additional words in the Talbiyah. In view of many other Sahaabah also adding to the Talbiyah, it is Mustahab to recite the few extra words.

This mas'alah is explained in *Badaai-us Sanaai'* as follows: *"If one adds to the Talbiyah, then it will be Mustahab according to us (the Ahnaaf)........The daleel for this is the narration from a Jamaa't (a whole group) of Sahaabah. They would add to the Talbiyah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)."*

In the group of the Sahaabah who would add to the Talbiyah were Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu). Thus, if 'extra words' are added to the Talbiyah in accordance with the practice of many Sahaabah, it will be in conformity with the Sunnah. There is no support for the bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid which have no origin and sanction in the Sunnah.

Imaam Bukhaari's practice

The venerable Mufti Sahib also attempts to find support for the Thikr programmes by reference to Imaam Bukhaari's practice of taking ghusl and performing two raka'ts Salaat before committing a Hadith to writing. In terms of the Mufti Sahib's logic, this practice of Imaam Bukhaari (rahmatullah alayh) is a basis for justifying the collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid. He complements this 'basis of justification' with Imaam Abu Hanifah's practice of performing Fajr Salaat with the Isha

wudhu. The weirdness of this logic should be self-evident.

These are personal acts of ibaadat which were never offered for public consumption nor promoted from the public platform, nor were people roped in to participate in these strictly personal acts of ibaadat executed in solitude and privacy. There is not the slightest vestige of a probability that such personal acts of ibaadat observed in concealment can constitute a basis or a danger for bid'ah. Abundance of personal ibaadat is a teaching of the Qur'aan and Hadith.

In contrast, the ostentatious displays of swaying mureedeen performing to the public gallery, chanting and chorusing loudly Thikr formulae, are cosmetic presentations in which the seeds of bid'ah are latent. All such unsubstantiated public 'ibaadat' customs have developed into bid'ah sayyiah. The examples of the Bareilwi sect loudly testify to this reality and danger. These were dangers which far-sighted Sahaabah such as Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood, Ibn Umar, Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhum) foresaw and nipped in the bud.

What is the relationship between Imaam Bukhaari's ghusl and the collective loud Thikr performances enacted in the Musaajid and portrayed as primary acts of Thikr to convey the notion that 'these' forms of Thikr are the acts of ibaadat which the entire Ummah has to observe? It is precisely with this idea at the back of their minds that some roving shaikhs tour the country to drum up support, like politicians, for their Thikr programmes. Then they despatch emissaries to the east, west, north and south of the country to canvass support for their Thikr performances. Instead of giving lessons in the Sunnah

and engaging in Amr Bil Ma'roof Nahy Anil Munkar, they invade the serenity of the Musaajid and initiate their collective Thikr programmes while most people stare and wonder agape at the transpirations in the Musaajid. They do not assist the masses with the Deen in this manner. They only further confuse and distort the pure unadulterated Sunnah which is supposed to be the legacy which the Ahl-e-Haqq acquired from the Sahaabah.

And, just what is the relationship of Imaam Abu Hanifah's private act of ibaadat – his ibaadat of retaining his wudhu from Isha to Fajr – with the bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances? No one propagates against any individual's right to perform any amount and any type of Nafl ibaadat or act of Taqwa, Wara' Thikr or Shaghl. This is everyone's inherent right. In fact every individual is exhorted by the Qur'aan and Ahaadith to be perpetually engage in Thikrullaah, Taqwa and Tahaarat every moment of his life. But such constant engrossment in ibaadat and taqwa on an individual basis is never a basis for enactment of collective acts to which is conferred the outward form and aura of Masnoon ibaadat so that it appears to the ignorant and uninitiated masses that these unsubstantiated acts are ordered by the Shariah.

New collective acts having an outer-façade of Masnoon ibaadat cannever be equated to the personal acts of ibaadat of individual Auliya who practised their devotional exercises in concealment. Such *athkaar* and *ashghaal* are not up for public sale and consumption. Such Thikr is essentially the communion which the devotee has with his Beloved Creator. There is no danger of such private acts of ibaadat developing into bid'ah. But when these acts are given an external form and promoted

in the public vociferously and ostentatiously, then the door of bid'ah is opened up wide.

If the Shariah had issued a licence for the perpetration of such innovated acts in the form of public performances, then by this day, Islam would have journeyed the same path of destruction and oblivion as had the Shariahs of the Yahood and Nasaaraa. To prevent this disaster, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) branded all innovated acts of ibaadat as *mardood* (rejected and accursed). Abundance of ibaadat – Nafl Salaat, Tilaawat, and constant Thikrullah – are orders of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. For this abundance of ibaadat which is Waajib on every individual, no particular outward form has been ordained, hence fabrication of unsubstantiated outward form is bid'ah.

The validity and value of the ibaadat are dependent on their *Shuroot, Arkaan, Sunans* and *Aadaab*. Now if an individual engages in Tilaawaat of the Qur'aan Shareef alone for hours, he acts fully in consonance with the command of Allah Ta'ala. But if a few individuals decide to cloak their ibaadat with an external veneer and form which neither the Qur'aan nor the Ahaadith has ordered nor even envisaged, then there can be no hesitation in branding the innovated form *(hait-e-kathaaiyyah)* as bid'ah sayyiah.

FURTHER DISCUSSION ON RASULULLAH'S ABSTENTION

The Fuqaha have branded as bid'ah certain acts of ibaadat from which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah had abstained. This rule of abstention poses a dilemma for the venerable Mufti Sahib who has labouriously and abortively slogged to show that commission of acts from which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained is not bid'ah. Since the Mufti Sahib has endeavoured to bolster his argument in favour of collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid with the contention that such public performances are not bid'ah on the basis of the claim that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had not engaged in such practices, says: *"A question may arise here that why, according to the jurists, certain actions which were not done by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) are innovations, for example to perform any voluntary Salaah before the Eid Salaah?"*

This is indeed a valid question. It is adequate evidence for Rasulullah's abstention in certain matters being a principle on the basis of which an act could be branded as bid'ah.

In a very poor and confusing attempt to argue away this principle, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"Sheikh Abul Fadhl Ghumaari (Rahmatullah alaih) has replied to this question by saying that an action which was not practiced upon cannot be termed an innovation but it will fall under the law of silence instead of speech gives room for voluntary practice.' Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) explained the rituals of Eid both verbally as*

well as practically, but Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) did not verbally or practically explain the practice of performing voluntary Salaah before the Eid Salaah. This is sufficient proof that this practice is not a desired one."

This answer only complicates the ambiguity. It does not in any way explain when would commission of an 'abstention' be bid'ah, and when would it not be bid'ah. If Rasulullah's abstention falls 'under the law of silence' allowing scope for 'voluntary' practice as has been asserted, then this principle could be applied to Nafl Salaat before Eid Salaat. Someone could validly or logically contend that Rasulullah's abstention from Nafl Salaat prior to Eid Salaat also 'falls under the law of silence', hence there is scope for voluntary performance on this occasion, especially if motivated by the principle of 'love' which the venerable Mufti Sahib had coined.

Similarly, Rasululllah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained from performing six raka'ts Fardh. Since the extra two raka'ts fall under the so-called 'law of silence', it should not be bid'ah to perform six raka'ts Fardh for Zuhr instead of four.

Similarly, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained from performing Salaat on one leg. This abstention should also come within the scope of the 'law of silence' and be permissible. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained from delivering any khutbah before the daily Fardh Salaat. The so-called 'law of silence' could also be invoked and further fortified by the Mufti Sahib's principle of 'love and rectification' to introduce khutbahs before the daily Fardh Salaat, and such accretions would then 'not' be bid'ah. Such

absurdities are the effects of the 'principles' which have been invented many many centuries after the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. These are 'principles' which are non-principles and fallacies.

The different interpretations for the sake of the acquisition of an all-embracing principle to solve the abstention conundrum, have not succeeded to formulate a principle which could be uniformly applied to the abstentions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) from acts of ibaadat. Some acts from which Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained are permissible whereas other acts of abstention are not permissible.

Regardless of the profound degree of love which a devotee may have, he may not commit such acts of abstention. For example, during the day time it is not permissible to perform more than four raka'ts Nafl Salaat with one Tasleem. However, during the night time, this could be exceeded and up to eight raka'ts may be performed with a single Tasleem. But even during the night time, eight raka'ts with one Tasleeem may not be exceeded. Yet, if *Qiyaas* (Shar'i Logic) is applied, the eight raka'ts with one Tasleem should apply to the daytime Nafl Salaat as well or conversely, the four raka't limit should apply to the night Nafl Salaat as well.

In this example, there are two identical acts of ibaadat, viz. Nafl Salaat. With regard to the Nafl of the day, there are two arguments proscribing more than four raka'ts with one Tasleem, viz. *Nass* and *Qiyaas.* The abstention of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and of the Sahaabah is the *Nass* (explicit proof of prohibition). The *Tab'iyyat* (Subordination) of Nafl to the Fardh Salaat is

the *Qiyaas*. Since more than four raka'ts with one Tasleem is not permissible in Fardh Salaat, subordination of Nafl to Fardh requires that it should likewise not exceed four raka'ts with one Tasleem.

This very same logical argument could be directed to the Nafl of the night. However, this logic is set aside because of *Nass*. Up to eight raka'ts with a single Tasleem have been narrated from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Now raises the question of performing more than eight raka'ts with a single Tasleem during the night time. Our *Jamhoor* Fuqaha proclaim it Makrooh (not permissible, prohibited), and the basis of the *Karaahat* ruling is Rasulullah's abstention. Anyone violating this abstention and out of 'love' and 'devotion' performs 10 raka'ts with one Tasleem during the night, will be guilty of bid'ah sayyiah, and we shall cite Rasulullah's Abstention as the *daleel* while the venerable Mufti Sahib will have to maintain silence, and not attempt to engage us in mental gymnastics by averring: *"An action which was not practiced upon by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) cannot be termed an innovation."*

In certain aspects, most certainly, actions "upon which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not practise", will be branded as innovation – bid'ah sayyiah. In this particular example, whether the excess is done individually or collectively, in privacy or in public – in all cases it will be bid'ah. Collectivity will be an aggravating factor compounding the evil of the act. "Love and rectification' cannot abrogate the Abstention for legitimizing the expression of love in bid'ah. True love for Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is inextricably

interwoven with *Ittiba'* – complete obedience and following the Sunnah in the light of the understanding of the Sahaabah.

In the glare of this sacred light, our logic and our love fade into oblivion.

Now if we should strictly apply logic, then performing 300 raka'ts or 500 raka'ts Nafl Salaat daily would also have to be branded bid'ah because this amount of Nafl Salaat in a single day has not been reliably attributed to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) nor to any Sahaabi. The Abstention principle will not be applied in this case. It will not be said that performing so much Nafl Salaat is bid'ah on the basis of Rasulullah's abstention.

What is the difference between the two acts of Abstention? For us Muqallideen of Imaam A'zam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) who are unable to display plumes of *Ijtihaad*, the answer is simple, brief and devoid of headaches. The Muqallid may not traverse beyond the parameters of the rulings of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen of whom he purports to be a subordinate. Since our Fuqaha have not branded as bid'ah 300 raka'ts nor predicated any *Karaahat* to it, we can safely state that in this example bid'ah is not involved despite the abstention of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Furthermore, the validity of an abundance of Nafl Salaat *(alal itlaaq)* is confirmed by the Ahaadith and corroborated by the *Ta-aamul* of the Salf-e-Saliheen of the Khairul Quroon era.

In the absence of an all-embracing, comprehensive principle which could cover all aspects of Rasulullah's Abstentions, and due to the unreliability of our defective logic, there is a need for a viable standard on the basis of

which the Abstentions could be scaled so that bid'ah could be accurately distinguished from Sunnah, and permissibility from impermissibility. The only criterion available for accomplishing this feat is the understanding and practice of the Sahaabah. They were the best and the practical exemplars of the Sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), hence he declared: *"All my Sahaabah are just (on the Path of Rectitude). Whomever of them you follow, you will be rightly guided."*

Lest men of short-sightedness and deficient knowledge, misconstrue this declaration of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and understand it to be a blanket licence or latitude to resort to the common practice of whimsical selection to fabricate fatwas of the nafs, there is a need for clarification. The authorities of the Shariah, the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were the only Men of Knowledge who were entitled to avail of this selection process. It was their function to decide and order for us Muqallideen which practices and interpretations of the Sahaabah to adopt. Thus, if our Mujtahid Imaam says that reciting Qunoot in Fajr Salaat is bid'ah because certain Sahaabah branded it bid'ah, then we shall simply ignore and dismiss the venerable Mufti Sahib's contrary averment on the basis of Qunoot in Fajr being Masnoon according to Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh). On the Day of Qiyaamah, Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh) may argue the issue with Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh). As far as we Muqallideen of Imaam A'zam (rahmatullah alayh) are concerned, it is bid'ah, and the venerable Mufti Sahib cannot shake this belief with his flair and penchant for 'ijtihad'. As a Muqallid, he may not produce a contrary view of any

Sahaabi or any Mujtahid Imaam to dismiss, counter or even water down the emphatic view of the Hanafi Math-hab stated with clarity and emphasis.

If the venerable Mufti Sahib wishes to embark on such a dubious exercise, he should first renounce his taqleed of Hanafi Math-hab. But to remain a professed Muqallid of the Math-hab, and to present arguments which not only confuse the masses of the Muqallideen, but serve to portray that our Math-hab is in 'error', is tantamount to treachery. We, therefore, say respectfully to the honourable Mufti Sahib, to confine himself honourably to the parameters of the Math-hab and to refrain from resorting directly to the wide variety of Ahaadith for proofs to support the collective loud Thikr performances of bid'ah in the Musaajid.

Ahaadith which another Math-hab cite as the basis for its masaa-il should not be presented in substantiation of whimsical practices of 'love' or 'rectification'. In so doing, the venerable Mufti Sahib is inadvertently and we concede, unintentionally, nullifying the masaa-il of his own Math-hab.

We may not decide the issue of Abstention in terms of our fancies or our logic or any crooked, hollow and wholly inadequate principle which anyone has fabricated. The only Principles which are of Shar'i substance are the laws of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The Sahaabah viewed certain acts as bid'ah because Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had abstained from them. Acts such as Nafl Salaat before Eid, Nafl Salaat in the Eidgah even after the Eid Salaat, more than four raka'ts with one Tasleem during the day, and more than eight raka'ts during the night, Athaan and Iqaamah for Eid

Salaat, Dhuhaa Salaat collectively, Nafl Salaat in Jamaa't, reciting Muhammadur Rasulullah at the end of the Athaan by the Muath-thin, reciting Qunoot in Fajr, performing collective Thikr in the Musjid, performing loud Thikr in the Musjid, Nafl Salaat during Fajr time and innumerable other acts of abstention, will be bid'ah if committed.

The endeavour to dispel the ruling of bid'ah as applicable to these acts of abstention, by digging out Hadith narrations purporting the contrary, as the venerable Mufti Sahib has done, e.g. his ruling on Qunoot, etc., is pure sophistry in view of the fact that our Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen have ruled on these subjects during the *Khairul Quroon.*

In brief, we are not in need of fabricating an unattainable comprehensive principle for covering all the Abstentions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Abstentions are *ad infinitum.* This is impossible. Our obligation is to submit to the explicit and clear rulings of our Fuqaha. Thus, when Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) says: *"Raising the voice in the Musjid is haraam even with Thikr"*, then we are expected to say: We hear and we submit! The plethora of interpretations of the much-later mufassireen and Sufiya are of no value in the process of formulating Ahkaam, if such interpretations conflict with the basic Ruling of our Imaam. The Rulings of the Fuqaha are imperative and of fundamental importance in matters relating to *Ahkaam*, not the interpretations of other authorities who have no standing in relation to the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen who were the first Link after the Sahaabah in the Chain of Ilm and Taqwa which connects the Ulama with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

ASTONISHING NAIVETY – FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE ACTION OF IBN MAS'OOD (radhiyallahu anhu)

The venerable Mufti Sahib displays astonishing naivety by saying: *"The Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radiyallahu anhu) was for the sake of caution and to close the door of innovation so that the general masses do not regard this act as a compulsory action of the Masjid and regard this specific manner of making zikr as Sunnah."*

The action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) will perpetually remain to haunt and deter all prospective perpetrators of bid'ah. The initial attempt by the venerable Mufti Sahib was to dislodge the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) from its lofty pedestal of Authenticity. If in the opinion of the venerable Mufti Sahib, the Hadith is unauthentic and unreliable, then he should construct an unassailable case for his claim. If in his view the Hadith should be discarded and not presented as proof against the perpetrators of Bid'ah, then it should suffice his cause to simply dismiss the narration as unreliable and unauthentic. What is the need for further interpretation?

No matter what exercises of interpretation have been implemented, this aim was not achieved, and cannever be achieved. Since the exercise to dislodge the Hadith has fallen flat, the venerable Mufti Sahib has been constrained to proffer the aforementioned figment. In so doing, he has displayed astonishing naivety.

If there was a need *"to close the door of innovation"* during even the era of the Sahaabah, is there then no such

need in our age in which there is a glut and preponderance of bid'ah accompanied by despicable motives of riya, ujub and takabbur? In this age of proximity to Qiyaamah, in this era of *sharr, fisq, fujoor, bid'ah, jahaalat* and *kufr* all reigning supreme in the Ummah, by what stretch of credulity could it be surmised that there is no need to close the door of innovation? When such a need had existed even during the *Khairul Quroon* era, how could it not exist today in this age of *jahaalat* in which 90% of the Ummah do not uphold even Salaat, the most vital Pillar of practical Islam? Bid'ah is rife all around us, yet the venerable Mufti Sahib concedes the need for closing the avenue of innovation during the time of the Sahaabah, while he fails to discern such a need in this age of indescribable fitnah and jahaalat.

Besides the issue of *Sadd-e-Baab* (closing the avenue), which is mere opinion, Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) expelled them after branding them *'Mubtadieen'* (innovators). He drew the attention of the group to the *amal* of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah. He highlighted the conflict of the collective loud Thikr with the ibaadat acts of the Sahaabah. In other words, he branded their very act, *per se,* as a dark bid'ah.

The Mufti Sahib further alleges: *"But after the masses were made aware of this, this practice was permitted."* Where was it permitted; by whom was it permitted, and when? This is a blatant claim without a *daleel.* Seeking to shroud this claim with a haze of confusion, the Mufti Sahib says: *"There are many examples of this nature found in the Sharee'ah, a few of which are: * Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihiu wasallam) initially prohibited the*

Sahaba from visiting the graveyard, but thereafter permitted it."

Both the prohibition and permission are *Mansoos*. But what is the *Nass* for Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's alleged later permission to conduct the collective loud Thikr performance in the Musjid? Down the long corridor of almost fourteen centuries, the Ulama who have been combating Bid'ah, have always quoted this narration of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) as one of their prime evidences in refutation of bid'ah. Nowhere is it mentioned that he had permitted this practice "after the masses were made aware".

The venerable Mufti Sahib has also misunderstood the purport of the prohibition and the later permission of visiting the Quboor. The permission granted to visit the graves was an abrogation of the earlier order, and this later permission was announced by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who had every right as the Rasool to issue orders of abrogation which he did under Divine guidance and command. His later permission rescinded the earlier prohibition. When Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) criticized and expelled the group of Bid'atis, he was not introducing any new *Hukm* which would be abrogated later on. Bid'ah is haraam for all time. The very act of the group Thikr was bid'ah, hence he prohibited it. He could not later rescind the prohibition because in the light of his Ijtihaad, the very act of their form of Thikr was bid'ah. He could not later permit it nor did he permit it.

There is therefore no abrogation which followed the banning while in the case of ziyaarat-e-quboor, both the

prohibition and permission were acts of Shaari' (alayhis salaam). The difference is stark and as clear as daylight.

If a Masnoon or Mustahab act is prohibited by the Ulama for the sake of closing the door of innovation, then the argument of later permission after the beliefs of the masses have been purified would be valid because a Mustahab practice is a valid order of the Shariah which was merely suspended on account of adverse external factors. The suspension is not abrogation of the *Hukm.* This suspension and reinstatement of a *hukm* are valid and permissible in only such acts which are permissible. It is not a process which could be applied to an act which is from the very outset unlawful or bid'ah. In so far as the collective loud Thikr practice is concerned, it is unlawful from the very outset. It is a bid'ah from its very inception. There is no precedent for this type of public collective ibaadat in the *Khairul Quroon* era. On the contrary, we find only criticism for it. Thus, the principle of suspension and later reinstatement which applies to Mubah and Mustahab actions may not be applied to unlawful acts.

In an analogy, it is imperative to understand the kind of example one tenders. Incorrect examples will render the analogy invalid. In the case of prohibition of ziyaarat-e-quboor, this action was initially a permissible act. It is allowed by the Shariah. It was temporarily suspended, but later reinstated when the corrupt factor encumbering it was eliminated. This principle cannot be applied to the loud collective Thikr performance in the public.

In his endeavour to hammer out support for the bid'ah Thikr programmes, the Mufti Sahib has presented more than a dozen actions of suspension and later reinstatement

of the practices. However, none of these could be a basis of permissibility for the bid'ah of public collective Thikr.

If an act was at one stage prohibited by Allah Ta'ala or His Rasool, and later allowed, cancelling the prohibition, then the cancellation is abrogation *(Naskh)* which is the right of only *Shaari' (alayhis salaam)*. This right cannot be arrogated by anyone else. The principle of temporary suspension may be applied to only lawful acts (mubah or mustahab acts), not to new customs and practices manufactured fourteen centuries after the advent of *Risaalat.*

A new practice is either permissible or not permissible. The category of *Istihbaab* is not applicable to practices which people invent. Such practices will be either permissible or not permissible. If it is permissible but contaminated with evil factors, the whole conglomeration will be unlawful. If it is an unlawful practice from the very beginning, such as the bid'ah 'ibaadat' – loud collective Thikr in the public, moulood, qiyaam, prostrating to the graves, etc. – then the question of temporary suspension simply does not develop.

With the many examples, the Mufti Sahib has only compounded the confusion and displayed greater naivety. Consider the following example which he presents: "*On one occasion Hazrat Umar (Radiyallahu anhu) ordered that the tree where the 'Pledge of Ridhwaan' took place and where the people began to perform Salaah be cut down. This he did in order to close the doors of corruption and polytheism.*"

Indeed, the Mufti Sahib has displayed extreme short-sightedness to say the least. The danger of 'corruption and polytheism' existed during the golden rule of Hadhrat

Umar (radhiyallahu anhu), during the *Khairul Quroon,* but the Mufti Sahib is unable to see and understand that in this age of *fitnah, fasaad and jahaalat*, there is greater danger of corruption and bid'ah developing from unsubstantiated practices which never had any origin in the Sunnah. Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) deemed it imperative to close the door of corruption and innovation, but the venerable Mufti Sahib neither sees such a need nor understands it. Hadhrat Umar's action of closing the avenues of corruption is an enduring Sunnah for us to follow.

Then the Mufti Sahib gives some examples of 'benedictions' which Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) prohibited while other Sahaabah permitted. This is not a justification for the bid'ah of the collective Thikr programmes staged in public. The 'benediction' issue has a valid basis in the Sunnah. What is the actual mas'alah on this issue? For the ruling we have to revert to the Fuqaha. We need not employ our opinion to extract a fatwa. It is an old issue for which there are clear rulings. If this practice is accompanied by factors of shirk and bid'ah, the benediction will be prohibited. If the belief is unadulterated and the practice is devoid of corruption, the original ruling of permissibility will apply. But this practice cannot be utilized as a basis for transference of its original permissibility to the collective loud Thikr public performance, for the simple reason that the former is upheld in the Sunnah while the latter has no sanction in the Sunnah. It is a new invention presented in the form of ibaadat which is bid'ah from the very inception.

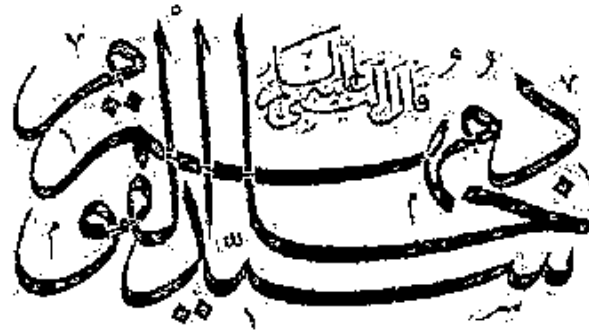
All the 'benediction' examples cited by the Mufti Sahib bear no relation to the newly invented bid'ah Thikr programmes.

The Mufti Sahib commits a grave act of injustice to the Shariah by presenting the example of the *duff* in a manner which dilutes the severity of the prohibition. The *duff*, for entertainment and musical purposes, is *haraam.* The principle of temporary suspension and later reinstatement does not apply to the *duff.* This is a prohibited musical instrument. Its permissibility on rare occasions is an exception. We have discussed this prohibition in detail in our book, *Sautus Shaitaan (The Voice of Shaitaan).* Anyone who wishes to pursue this subject, may write for the book.

The Mufti Sahib in another misdirected example states: *"According to Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (Radiyallahu anhu) a person who intentionally kills another will remain in Jahannum forever. This he said for the sake of warning..."*

If he had in fact *"said this for the sake of warning",* in which way is this a basis for legitimizing the bid'ah collective loud Thikr in the Musjid? Even if we have to assume that the interpretation which the Mufti Sahib has predicated to the view expressed by Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) is correct, then too there is no succour in this view for the bid'ah Thikr performances. Furthermore, apart from the irrelevancy of this example viewed in the context of the bid'ah loud collective Thikr performances, what is the *daleel* for claiming with certitude that the view which Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) had expressed was not his

genuine and permanent view, and was merely for the 'sake of warning'? The Mufti's assumption has no basis.

Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) had every right to hold this view. He was a Mujtahid in his own right, and his understanding of the Qur'aan was perfect. There is no need for the Mufti Sahib's interpretation.

THE FOUR SILSILAHS

The venerable Mufti Saheb contends: *"If we were to practice on the Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radiyallahu anhu), then every action practiced by the four Silsilahs in the Masaajid will fall under the category of innovation, but no one holds this view."*

This conclusion is indeed preposterous and most unbefitting a Man of Knowledge. Firstly, the Mufti Sahib is aware that *Dalaa-il* are acquired from the Four Sources of the Shariah. The 'four silsilahs' do not form part of the Four Sources of Shar'i Law. The practices, prescriptions and remedies of the Four Silsilahs are not proof in the Shariah. The prescriptions of the Four Silsilahs are private issues confined to the khaanqah (the spiritual hospital). The Mashaaikh themselves state with clarity that their prescriptions are remedies, not acts of Masnoon ibaadat.

It is truly lamentable to read that the venerable Mufti Sahib has stooped to this ebb in his quest for Shar'i *dalaa-il*. It is totally unexpected. Secondly, the Musaajid where some Mashaaikh practised their *athkaar* and *ashghaal,* were not public cosmopolitan Musaajid. The Musaajid were small Musjids which were under the veritable control of the Shaikh. It would be no exaggeration to claim that these Musjids were part of the Khaanqahs or fully under the influence of the Khaanqah.

Thirdly, if a choice has to be made, then the action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) will prevail and cancel out the actions of the Four Silsilahs. The actions and verdicts of the Sahaabah are basis in the Shariah. The actions of the Four Silsilahs do not enjoy this status. The Mufti Sahib has placed the cart before the horse. In the

attempt to validate the non-Masnoon practices of the Four Silsilahs, it is highly improper and not permissible to debunk the categoric rulings of the Sahaabah, especially a Sahaabi of the status of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Fourthly, the Mufti Sahib in his zeal to vindicate the collective loud Thikr performances, has erred in attributing unanimity of the Four Silsilahs regarding their Thikr programmes. The Naqshabandi Silsilah does not tolerate loud Thikr, leave alone loud collective Thikr.

Fifthly, the illustrious Mashaaikh of the Four Silsilahs do not dismiss the action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) in the despicable manner the Mufti Sahib has. They all uphold the validity of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's expulsion of the Bid'atis. Our senior Mashaaikh of the Chishti Silisilah, who were Ulama-e-Rabbaani, Aarifeen and Muhaqqiq Sufiya, present the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) in refutation of the acts of bid'ah perpetrated in particular by the Bareilwi bid'atis. None of our Mashaaikh of the Silsilahs have argued away, faulted or dislodged the action and narration of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). But, lamentably, the venerable Mufti Sahib who holds no pedestal in relation to the Akaabir Mashaaikh of the Four Silsilah, deemed it appropriate to despicably assail the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Sixthly, if the venerable Mufti Sahib is unable to formulate a reconciliation between the action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) and the actions of the Four Silsilah, then his training and knowledge as a Mufti should have constrained him to set aside the prescriptions

of the Four Silsilah and bow in submission to the command of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). The actions, practices and fataawa of the Sahaabah, especially the Fuqaha among the Sahaabah, may not be subordinated to the peculiar non-Sunnah practices of the Four Silsilah. This is self-evident, and requires no dilatory exposition.

THE EID TAKBEER – FURTHER DISCUSSION

In another serious impropriety, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"In our present times, the Takbeer of Eid is recited aloud after the Fajr Salaah until sunrise, in the Holy Haram of Makkah and every person present also recites Takbeer. None of the Ulama regard this as undesirable even though it falls under the category of innovation according to the narration of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Raddiyallahu anhu)."*

The venerable Mufti Sahib has descended to the level of an *aami* (layman) in the presentation of this ludicrous whimsical *'daleel'* to justify the bid'ah of the collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid. There are a number of objections which in entirety nullify this spurious argument.

(1) The worst incongruity stated by the Mufti Sahib in this regard is his averment: *"None of the Ulama regard this as undesirable even though it falls under the category of innovation….."*

If truly, the recitation of the Takbeer in this loud collective manner is an innovation (bid'ah), then even if all the Ulama of this age condone it, the ruling of bid'ah

will not change. Furthermore, those Ulama who refrain from Amr Bil Ma'roof Nahy anil Munkar in this respect, come within the scope of Rasulullah's stricture: *"The one who remains silent about the Haqq (i.e. he conceals the Haqq) is a dumb shaitaan."*

Did the venerable Mufti Sahib make an intelligent and a proper survey of the Ulama of the world to ascertain if *all* the Ulama are in agreement with the bid'ah which takes place in the Holy Haram at Makkah? On what basis does the Mufti Sahib make this sweeping arbitrary claim that "none of the Ulama regard this practice as undesirable"?

What takes place in the Holy Haram and in Saudi Arabia is not necessarily the Shariah. For the Shariah, we advise the honourable Mufti Sahib to resort to the kutub of the Fuqaha, and that too, the Hanafi kutub since he is a Hanafi muqallid.

What is the Mufti Sahib's basis for averring that *"every person present also recites Takbeer"* loudly in rythym with the concourse? This statement is grossly misleading. Firstly, we are positive that the venerable Mufti Sahib did not ascertain from every one of the half million persons present in Musjidul Haraam if he/she was reciting Takbeer loudly. Secondly, the Mufti Sahib attempts to create the notion that *"every person present",* recites the Takbeer loudly in response to the chorus of the officially appointed group who initiates the Takbeer chorus. Innumerable Hanafis present recite the Takbeer on their own silently, not in response to the chorus. The arbitrary claim that every person present recites the Tabkeer loudly is baseless.

Should we assume momentarily that indeed every person does recite the Takbeer loudly in response to the government-appointed stage group, it will not detract from the bid'ah which the manner of the recital constitutes. The Shariah cannot be abrogated by the mannerism of crowds among whom are thousands who do not hesitate to punch, pull and perform bestially at Hajr-e-Aswad. What the crowds perpetrate in the Haram Shareef is not the Shariah. What the establishment Ulama enact in the Haram is not the Shariah.

After having conceded that the loud Takbeer recited in the Haram Shareef is bid'ah, then on the basis of which *daleel* does the venerable Mufti Sahib condone the practice? If it is his 'love' or some idea of 'rectification', then let him understand that these factors are not proofs in the Shariah. The practices of Saudi Arabia do not constitute *Shar'i daleel.*

The venerable Mufti Sahib has subtly attempted to convey the idea that this mannerism of reciting the Takbeer is innovation in terms of the opinion of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). This notion is baseless. If the Mufti Sahib is perhaps not aware of the Ahnaaf masaa-il pertaining to Takbeer-e-Tashreeq, he should be apprized that reciting the Takbeer loudly at the venue of the Eid Salaat is bid'ah on both Eids. This is the unanimous ruling of the Hanafi Math-hab. It is therefore, not permissible for followers of the Hanafi Math-hab to join the crowd in the bid'ah of loud Takbeer.

DEROGATION OF HADHRAT ABDULLAH IBN MAS'OOD

In his floundering attempts to 'prove' the validity of collective loud Thikr public performances, the venerable Mufti Sahib loses his mental eqilibrium, hence he resorted to denigrating even the ibaadat practices of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). In derogation of this eminent, most senior Sahaabi, the Mufti Sahib states: *"....but it would not be correct to regard everything that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radiyallahu anhu) said as law. For example, Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radiyallahu anhu) whilst performing Salaah used to strike his hands and thereafter placed them between his thighs whilst in ruku', saying that this was the practice of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alihi wasallam); but this practice has been abrogated."*

The Mufti Sahib presents another three examples of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's practices which 'are not law' according to him (the Mufti).

Firstly, it is highly disrespectful for a muqallid mufti in this belated century – 14 centuries after the Sahaabah – to insinuate that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was unaware of the 'law', and that his practices of ibaadat cannot be relied on. Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was a Mujtahid of the highest calibre among the Sahaabah Fuqaha. He did not dig out masaa-il from his pocket as is the practice of the Mufti Sahib who advocates the bid'ah collective Thikr programmes as public performances in the Musaajid. He had his *Dalaa-il*, while the Mufti Sahib has views which could be described as convoluted whimsical opinions.

The muqallid Mufti Sahib is in no position to claim that *all* the practices of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) are not law nor has he any right to proffer an opinion which is derogatory of the superior standing of this great Sahaabi in the firmament of Ilm and Ijtihaad and observance of the Sunnah.

If certain practices of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) are not part of our Math-hab, this cannot be cited as a *daleel* to refute the narration in which it is reported that he had expelled the Bid'atis from the Musjid. The Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, had set aside certain practices of some Sahaabah on the basis of solid *dalaa-il* acquired from the narrations of Sahaabah, not on the basis of opinion. But this Mufti Sahib who desperately advocates and promotes public performances of loud Thikr ludicrously attempts to dismiss a Hadith with other practices which are unrelated to the subject under discussion. It is improper and in conflict with the demands of Knowledge to dismiss one Hadith of a Sahaabi on the basis that another Hadith pertaining to another practice has not been accepted.

It is thus, incongruous for the Mufti Sahib to argue that Hadhrat Ibn Masood's narration on the expulsion of the bid'atis is to be rejected on the basis of his practice of 'striking his hands' not having been accepted for *amal* by our Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen of the Hanafi Math-hab. Similarly, it is absurd and displays gross misdirection of the mind, to dismiss the expulsion of the bid'ati narration on the basis of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's practice of standing between two musallis to lead the Salaat not forming part of our Math-hab. The Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen decided such issues. They were the only

Fuqaha who were qualified to examine the Ahaadith for the purpose of formulating the masaa-il. The Mufti Sahib is not in the category of the Fuqaha-e-Mujtahideen. He has to incumbently remain within the confines of the Math-hab which he purports to be following.

No one has ever contended that every view and practice of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu ahu) forms part of the Hanafi Math-hab which we follow. It is therefore, superfluous and diversionary for the Mufti Sahib to introduce this figment as an argument against those who reject the collective Thikr displays in the Musaajid. While all the practices and opinions of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood do not form part of the Hanafi Math-hab, these were issues which were decided and finalized fourteeen centuries ago, and are not up for examination, dissection and selection by muqallideen Muftis. It is furthermore, stupid to reject one view of a Sahaabi simply because another view related to another mas'alah was not accepted by the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. Such issues were decided by the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen on the basis of solid Shar'i evidences, not whimsical opinion as the Mufti Sahib has displayed.

As has been shown earlier, our Fuqaha, Ulama and Akaabireen of even the Chishti Silsilah upheld the veracity and validity of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's narration in their refutation of bid'ah.

The Mufti Sahib proceeding with his fallacious arguments, says: *"The prohibition of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radiyallahu anhu) regarding the gathering in the Masjid can be likened to the prohibition of Hazrat Abu Zarr (Radiyallahu anhu) regarding the hoarding of wealth. In a like manner Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud*

(Radiyallahu anhu) did not like to see such an act being practiced in the Masjid which would later on be regarded as Sunnah."

But the Mufti Sahib would perhaps like to see his collective loud Thikr performances later on being regarded as Sunnah. The Mufti Sahib has completely lost his dialectical bearings in presenting his arguments. When Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) expelled the bid'atis because he foresaw the danger of their act being later on regarded as Sunnah, as the Mufti Sahib himself concedes', then what insulates the present collective loud Thikr performances against the danger of being elevated to the status of Sunnah or even Wujoob? Is it not incumbent for the Mufti Sahib to follow the example of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) on this issue?

If Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's action is likened to Hadhrat Abu Zarr's action, then in which way does this equation legitimize the bid'ah collective Thikr which the Mufti Sahib advocates? Hadhrat Abu Zarr (radhiyallahu anhu) had his own view pertaining to hoarding wealth which he prohibited in entirety. The fact that our Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen had not incorporated Hadhrat Abu Zarr's view into the Hanafi Math-hab, is not a basis for dismissing the validity of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's expulsion of the bid'atis. The Aimmah had their Qur'aan and Ahaadith Nusoos on the basis of which Hadhrat Abu Zarr's view was not accepted. It was not a product of their fanciful interpretation and opinion. But there is absolutely no resemblance between the two entirely different masaa-il. The one does not constitute a basis for the other as the Mufti Sahib has abortively attempted to

peddle. Furthermore, The Fuqaha of the Hanafi Math-hab, did not entertain the absurd analogy of the Mufti Sahib. They uphold the validity of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's action.

THIKR-E-MUFRID AND DHARB

The Mufti Sahib has also presented argument in favour of *Thikr-e-Mufrid* and the practice of *Dharb*. There is no need for us to discuss this topic as we do believe in the permissibility of these remedial measures of a temporary nature introduced by the Mashaaikh for certain benefits.

However, these practices are not Masnoon acts of ibaadat, and have to be confined to privacy. They are not to be performed for the public gallery in the Musaajid where there is a real danger of them developing into bid'ah.

THE KHAANQAH THIKR PROGRAMMES

The Mufti Sahib has also endeavoured and laboured to forge a basis of permissibility for his public Thikr peformances by offering the Khaanqah practices of some of our Akaabireen. Among the several Khaanqahs he has mentioned, the reference to Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) is noteworthy and requires some explanation. Describing the 'loud Thikr' in Hadhrat Thaanvi's Khaanqah, the Mufti Sahib says: *"During the time of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thaanwi (Rahmatullah alaih), it was a practice that after Fajr Salaah the people remained in the Masjid till after sunrise. Some were occupied in reading their Wazeefah's,*

others recited the Glorious Qur'an and others made loud zikr. After sunrise Maddarash would commence.

It was a personal practice of Hazrat Thaanwi (Rahmatullah alaih) to make loud zikr after Tahajjud Salaah. He was also joined by Hazrat Khwaajah Sahib and other great personalities. Never did Hazrat Thaanwi (Rahmatullah alaih) prevent this."

Let us accept that this was the custom in Hadhrat Thaanwi's khaanqah after Fajr Salaat. Engagement in audible Thikr was a khaanqah practice adopted to train the mureedeen. It was not a Masnoon act of ibaadat. It was not executed in the Jaami' Musjid of the town. It was not practised in the other town Musaajid which was frequented by all and sundry. It was a private practice confined to the khaanqah.

Furthermore, the practices of the khaanqah cannot override the rulings of the Shariah. What happpened in the khaanqah does not confer *afdhaliyyat (superiority and greater merit)* to *Thikr bil Jahr*. The Khaanqah practices cannot demote the primary *Thikr-e-Khafi* to a secondary status. *Thikr-e-Khafi* has been accorded *afdhaliyyat* by the Qur'aan, Sunnah and the explicit rulings of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. It is the official stance of the Hanafi Math-hab.

The khaanqah practices on the other hand, are essentially private practices introduced as a temporary measure for the acquisition of certain spiritual benefits. These benefits do not alter the ruling of the Shariah as propounded by the Math-hab we follow.

It will be salutary for the venerable Mufti Sahib, to digest what Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) had instructed regarding the public

Thikr performances in the Musaajid. One of the khulafa of Hadhrat Thaanwi (rahmatullah alayh), wrote to him:

"This year some associates (mureedeen) complained of separation. Some of them were of the opinion that when I am not present with them, then the thaakireen and shaaghileen (those who engage in Thikr and shaghl) should assemble once a week in one place, for example on Friday night, and engage in Thikr, fikr and shaghl so that ghaflat is eliminated. I considered this to be good, hence since two or three weeks I intentionally gathered them. I narrate some naseehat to them, while the greater part of the night is spent in Thikr and shaghl. Even though a circle was not formed, the effects of *thauq, shauq and muhabbat* (pleasure, eagerness and love) were experienced in this congregational form. I have therefore emphasised and instructed that this Thikr and shaghl programme be always observed weekly, and the whole night be spent in a Musjid. Although I have not discerned any bid'ah in this, nevertheless, since no instruction was given for such an observance, there is some agitation in my heart. Will this not perhaps develop into an evil practice?"

* Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali (rahmatullah alayh), succinctly forbidding this collective Thikr programme, instructed his khalifah:

"Most certainly there is this danger (of bid'ah) for the future. Whatever Thikr and shaghl you wish to make alone, do so. This is quite possible. The arrangement for Ijtima' (collectivity, gathering) should be terminated." (Tarbiyatus Saalik)

Whoever attempts to cite Hadhrat Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) in support of public collective loud Thikr performances, is guilty of perpetrating deception and renders a grave injustice to Hakimul Ummah who was meticulous and ever diligent in closing the avenue of bid'ah. Earlier in this treatise, we have presented the unambiguous views of Hadhrat Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) on the bid'ah practice of collective loud Thikr performances.

The private Thikr practices which were enacted in the privacy of the khaanqah should not be cited as a basis for legitimizing the bid'ah public Thikr performances in the Musaajid. The aforementioned directive which Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) issued to his khalifah amply illustrates Hakimul Ummat's attitude and view regarding the public Thikr performances.

THE CONFUSION OF THE MUFTI SAHIB

The theme of the Mufti Sahib's booklet is confusion. This confusion may be intentional or unintentional. Since the Mufti Sahib's actual aim is to strike a Shar'i basis for the collective loud Thikr performances conducted in the Musaajid, the first step in this process was to prove the permissibility of loud Thikr. Then on this basis he believed that the bid'ah Thikr programmes in the Musaajid could be passed off as valid Shar'i practices of ibaadat. With this end in view, the Mufti Sahib set out from the beginning of his discussion to the end, providing

copious references to 'prove' the *jawaaz* (permissibility) of loud Thikr.

JAHR-E-MUFRIT (excessive loudness – shouting)

We have no problem with the permissibility of moderate audibility since we too believe in its permissibility. We are averse to predicate permissibility to 'loud' Thikr. By 'loud' is generally meant *jahr-e-mufrit* (excessive loudness) which is the inevitable and ultimate result of all unsubstantiated, non-Masnoon forms of collective Thikr practices. Testifying to the excessive loudness of such programmes, even the Mufti sahib states:

"The practice of loud zikr in the Khanqa of the city of Gangoh. Hazrat Qaari Muhammad Tayyib Sahib (Rahmatullah alaih) has stated that on one side of this Khanqa was a huge pond. On the other side of this pond was a Masjid in which Hazrat Moulana Yahya Khandlawi (Rahmatullah alaih) together with his students and associates stayed. After half the night passed, both in the Khanqa as well as in the Masjid loud zikr was practiced. The effects of their zikr caused the entire place to vibrate and echo with the words Laa-ilaaha illallah, illallahu and Allahu Allah. Even the people washing their clothes in the pond were affected by this Thikr so much so that they developed the habit of chanting the slogan Allahu Allah whilst washing their clothes."

They chanted in response to the melodious rythmic tune of the chorus. The chanting of the khaanqah people is no 'daleel' for permissibility. Leave alone the washer men and their raucous chanting, let us examine the other

ingredients and effects of this *jahr-e-mufrit Thikr* of the khaanqah. Irrespective of the repositories of this collective Thikr being our Akaabireen, their action has to be scaled on the Standard of the Shariah.

To produce the effect of even the walls vibrating and echoing, the Thikr must indeed have been executed in screaming tones. It could not have been less than *jahr-e-mufrit.* Only *jahr-e-mufrit* can cause the walls of the khaaqah and the Musjid to vibrate and echo. Now what has happened to Rasulullah's command:

"Have mercy on your souls!"

At different junctures in his discussion, the Mufti Sahib had laboriously struggled to reconcile Rassulullah's prohibition of loud Thikr, as well as the unequivocal rulings of the Fuqaha pertaining to prohibition of loud Thikr. The Mufti Sahib has all along contended that the prohibition announced by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) as well as the Fuqaha pertains to *jahr-e-mufrit* (excessive loudness), and this is in fact the contention of all the authorities of the Shariah. *Jahr-e-Mufrit* is unanimously haraam. There is no difference of opinion on this issue. Even our honourable Mufti Sahib who so dishonourably embarked on his treatise of confusion, concedes that *jahr-e-mufrit* is not permissible.

We implore the Mufti Sahib to view the khaanqah Thikr objectively with a clear mind, denuded of the cobwebs of bias and vindictiveness. What type of *jahr* produces vibration of even the walls of the Musjid and khaanqah? What type of *jahr* leads to the walls echoing? Permissible Audible Thikr *(Thikr bil Jahr)* aside, is it

permissible to scream, shout and constrain the walls to vibrate and echo with Thikr? Is this not the *jahr-e-mufrit* which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) forbade the Sahaabah from when they were loudly reciting Takbeer and Tahleel while ascending and descending a mountain? Is this not the type of Thikr which all authorities without a single exception – including the Khaanqah Mashaaikh – say is haraam and bid'ah?

If the venerable Mufti Sahib is able to convince himself of the virtues of fairness and justice, and if he is able to release himself from the reins of bigotry which have constrained him to fling fallacious 'dalaa-il' blindly in confusion, then he will have no option other than to concede that the type of Thikr he has attributed to the khaanqah – the Thikr which caused the walls to vibrate and echo – is undoubtedly haraam, bid'ah *jahr-e-mufrit* – the *hurmat* of which is *Ijmaai'* (unanimous).

Throughout his booklet, the venerable Mufti Sahib has emphasized that *Thikr-bil jahr* is permissible only if it does not disturb anyone who is engaged in Salaat, Tilaawat or sleep. If the audible Thikr disturbs any person in his sleep or ibaadat, it will not be permissible. This is the unanimous ruling of all those authorities who aver the permissibility of *Thikr bil jahr.* There is 100% certitude that a *jahr* which has the 'power' to cause even walls to vibrate and echo, will assuredly not allow any person to sleep nor to engage in individual ibaadat – Nafl Salaat, Tilaawat, Dua, Thikr, etc.

If the venerable Mufti Sahib responds that no one was disturbed by this *jahr-e-mufrit* since the khaanqah and the Musjid were private venues, not public places of a cosmopolitan character, then it will be a concession of

what we are saying, namely, the khaanqah Thikr programmes are strictly speaking private affairs and practices intended for the spiritual patients in the spiritual hospital (the khaanqah). Spiritual remedies, even haraam *jahr-e-mufrit* is sometimes administered to patients in an advanced stage of disease. If no halaal remedy is available for such patients, then *Tadaawee bil haraam* (medical treatment with haraam) is a well established and known principle in Fiqh. It could, in fact is, also applied in the spiritual realm for mureedeen suffering from spiritual ailments.

If this is not the case, then the only conclusion is that the khaanqah *jahr-e-mufrit* even if no one was disturbed by the excessive loudness, shouting and screaming, is bid'ah and haraam. *Jahr-e-Mufrit* is unanimously not permissible for even individuals in the privacy of their homes. We hold extremely high opinions of our Mashaaikh since we too are of the Chishti stock. While we have never experienced our Akaabireeen engaging in *jahr-e-mufrit* even in the Khaanqah, and while *Thikr bil jahr* is totally overshadowed, in fact almost discarded, in the branch of the Chishti Silsilah which we follow, we nevertheless do not accuse the Mufti Sahib of stating a blatant lie in his attribution of *jahr-e-mufrit* to the khaanqah Thikr programme he has described. We attribute such *Thikr-e-mufrit* as practised in the khaanqah in terms of the description of the venerable Mufti Sahib to *Tadaawi bil haraam* necessitated by perculiar circumstances.

From the aforementioned explanation it should be quite evident that it is highly improper to proffer the *jahr-e-mufrit*, which is unanimously haraam, as a *daleel*

for the permissibility of the collective loud Thikr performances conducted in the public Musaajid which are not khaanqah Musjids nor khaanqahs nor the preserves of any particular buzroog whose Silsilah holds sway.

The khaanqah practices do not feature anywhere in the process of formulation of *Ahkaam.*It does not behove a Mufti to present khaanqah practices as *Mustadallaat* (basis of deductioon) for issuing Fataaawa on Shar'i issues. The venerable Mufti Sahib has laboured arduously and abortively in his attempt to convince the unwary ones that the illustrious Fuqaha had erred in using the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) as a *Mustadal* (basis for their ruling of prohibition). But, without hesitation he tenders the peculiar practices of the khaanqah as his *'mustadal'* for legitimizing the bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances. The emphatic views of Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) have already been mentioned earlier.

MAULANA ABDUL HAYY

The venerable Mufti Sahib has also endeavoured to compound the confusion, intentionally or unintentionally, by selective citation or citing statements out of context. Consider his statement: *"Hazrat Moulana Abdul Hay Lakhnowi (Rahmatullah alaih) has explained this verse in detail in his kitab Sabaahatul Fikr Fil Jahri Biz Zikr. A summary of his discussion is given hereunder...."* In the summary is mentioned the prohibition of excessive loudness and screaming when making Thikr.

Besides the fact of Maulana Abdul Hayy's explanation re-enforcing the prohibition of the *jahr-e-*

mufrit which constrained the walls of the khaanqah and its Musjid to vibrate and echo, the venerable Mufti Sahib, conveniently ignores the following clear-cut rulings which Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) states in his treatise, *Sabaahatul Fikr Fil Jahri Bith-Thikr:*

(1) "The meaning of the word 'khair' in Rasulullah's statement: *'Khairuth Thikr al-khafi' (The best Thikr is silent Thikr)',* is that in *Thikr-e-Khafi* there is greater goodness, and in *jahr*, there is less goodness."

Yet, throughout his discussion, the Mufti Sahib has been abortively at pains to 'prove' the superiority of *Thikr-e-jahr.*

(2) "In this Hadith is a daleel for the permissibility of Thikr bil jahr. Undoubtedly, it is established in the Shariah. But, *Khafi Thikr is afdhal (superior)."*

This too, debunks the Mufti Sahib's claim of the *afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr bil jahr.*'

(3) Further explaining the rulings pertaining to Thikr, Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) says: *"Verily, there is no doubt in that Sirr (silent Thikr) is superior to jahr (audible Thikr) because of the humility and concealment. Similarly, there is no doubt in the fact that jahr-e-mufrit is prohibited by virtue of the Hadith: 'Have mercy on yourselves..."* Citing from *An-Nihaayah,* he states: *"According to us (Ahnaaf) Silence in Athkaar is Mustahab except in special cases of announcement, e.g. Athaan, Talbiyah, Khutbah as mentioned in Al-Mabsoot."*

Continuing his exposition, Maulana Abdul Hayy says: *"It is obvious that the meaning of those who say "Jahr is haraam", is jahr-e-mufrit........and those who say that it (jahr) is bid'ah, mean thereby a special form of execution*

and to make incumbent what the Shariah has not made incumbent.......”

The collective loud Thikr form which the Mufti Sahib advocates, comes within the scope of this prohibition. It is both haraam and bid’ah.

(4) “Yes, *Al-Jahrul Mufrit* is prohibited by the Shariah. Similarly (is prohibited) such *jahr which is not mufrit* when it distresses anyone who is asleep or who performs Salaat or is accompanied by a vestige of riya, or is accompanied by factors which are in conflict with the Shariah or is regarded as being incumbent. Many are the permissible things which became Makrooh because of *iltizaam* (making incumbent), as Ali Qaari has explicitly mentioned in Sharhul Mishkaat, and Al-Haskafi in Ad-Durrul Mukhtaar.”

When there are a number of conditions regulating even the permissibility of *Thikr ghair mufrit,* how does the venerable Mufti Sahib reconcile with all this, the *jahr-e-mufrit* which causes khaanqah and Musjid walls to vbirate and echo throughout the greater part of the night enchanting even the washermen?

(5) “This (Hadith, viz. the best Thikr is the silent Thikr) does not indicate that audible Thikr is prohibited. On the contrary, it indicates the *afdhaliyyat* of silent Thikr. And, there is no dispute in this.”

While asserting the permissibility of audible Thikr, Maulana Abdul Hayy unambiguously affirms the superiority of silent Thikr. He further adds that there is no contention – no dispute – in this fact, viz., that silent Thikr is superior. But, the venerable Mufti Sahib has ploughed all his academic energy into the indefensible task of ‘proving’ that audible Thikr is superior.

IMAAM ABU HANIFAH (RAHMATULLAH ALAYH)

Commenting on the imagined view of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), the venerable Mufti Sahib, avers: "In Ruhul Ma'ani Allamah Aloosi (Rahmatullah alaih) has said: "Imaam Abu Hanifa (Rahmatullah alaih) has given preference to loud zikr."

Even if this averment does appear in Ruhul Ma'aani, we must unequivocally say that it is a blatant falsity attributed to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh). If Allaamah Aloosi (rahmatullah alayh) has indeed made this erroneous attribution, it should be set aside and some suitable interpretation accorded to it.

Ruhul Ma'aani cannot be presented in opposition to and in refutation of the Works of Fiqah such as *Al-Mabsoot* of Imaam Sarakhsi and *Badaaius Sanaa'* of Allaamah Kaasaani. Ruhul Ma'anai has no status in relation to the kutub of the illustrious Fuqaha who are the chief exponents of the Shariah. Allaamah Kaasaani (rahmatullah alayh) says in *Badaaius Sanaa':* "According to Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), raising the voice with Takbeer is actually bid'ah because it is Thikr, and the Sunnah in Athkaar is silence by virtue of the statement (aayat) of Allah Ta'ala: *'Call unto your Rabb in humility and silence.'*, and by virtue of Rasulullah's statement, *'The best dua is the silent (dua).'*And also because it (silent Thikr) is closer to humility and respect, and furthest from riya. Thus, this original principle will not be abandoned except when there is a determinant."

Beides *Badaaius Sanaai'* all the kutub of Fiqah uniformly state Imaam Abu Hanifah's view of prohibition. Now whether the prohibition stated by

Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) applies to *jahr-e-mufrit* or even *jahr ghair mufrit*, the conclusion that he "gave preference to loud Thikr" is manifestly baseless and has been wrongly attributed to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh).

Dismissing the false attribution to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya (rahmatullah alayh), says in *Aujazul Masaalik:*

"Some people have said that there is no *karaahat* in it (i.e. in raising the voice in the Musjid). They say that Abu Hanifah is among them. Al-Qaari (Mullah Ali Qaari) said that the attribution of the negation of *mutlaq karaahah to Imaam A'zam is a blatantly false attribution to him because his Math-hab is the prohibition of raising the voice in the Musjid even with Thikr."*

FATHUL QADEER

The Mufti Sahib states: *"In Fathul Qadeer under the commentary of this Hadith it is stated: 'From the above Hadith and similar others it becomes clear that there is absolutely no aversion in the methods adopted by the Soofis in hosting gatherings of loud zikr in the Masaajid in which the kalmia Laa-ilaaha illalla is recited aloud."*

The Mufti Sahib has omitted to apprize readers of the principle pertaining to Thikr which the author of *Fathul Qadeer,* Allaamah Ibnul Humaam (rahmatullah alayh) stated with emphasis in the same kitaab. Explaining the principle, he says in *Fathul Qadeer:*

"The principle in athkaar is Ikhfa', and jahr with it is bid'ah."

Now when this is the primary principle regulating Thikr, which Allaamah Ibn Humaam (rahmatullah alayh)

emphatically states, the aforementioned claim attributed to him appears preposterous. The claim of loud Thikr in the Musaajid by 'soofis' is an erroneous attribution to Allaamah Humaam (rahmatullah alayh). The Mufti Sahib appears to have erred somewhere along the trajectory. There is no such statement in *Fathul Qadeer.*

RUHUL MA'AANI

The Mufti Sahib also cites Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh) as a *daleel* for his case. At most, the Mufti Sahib is able to extract the permissibility of audible Thikr from the views of Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh). As far as the collective loud Thikr displays in the Musaajid are concerned, the Mufti sahib has conveniently overlooked the following comment of Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh), also in Ruhul Ma'aani:

"You will observe numerous people of your time shouting in dua especially in the Jaami' Musaajid so much so that the noise becomes great and the ears are deafened while they do not know that they have gathered two acts of bid'ah: raising the voice in dua and doing that in the Musjid."

All public Thikr performances ultimately lead to such excesses as pointed out by Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh). Even the halqah Thikr and dua practices of the Bareilwis began with sincerity and good intentions. With the progress of time, these acts were transformed into entrenched bid'ah sayyiah. This will be the inevitable and ultimate position of the current collective loud Thikr performances which the Mufti Sahib is promoting.

The Mufti Sahib's penchant for selective and misleading citation from the kutub of the Mufassireen and Fuqaha is a travesty of justice to say the least.

HAASHIYAH TAHTAAWI

The Mufti Sahib, citing this kitaab states: *"According to Haashiyatut Tahtaawi Alaa Maraaqil Al-Falaah it is not a prohibition to make loud zikr in the Masaajid as Allah Ta'ala says: "And who can be more oppressive than him who prevents the name of Allah Ta'ala from being mentioned in the Houses of Allah Ta'ala." The Ulama have unanimously agreed that it is preferable to host gatherings of zikr in the Masaajid as well as out of the Masaajid, except in the case when making loud zikr would disturb a person who is sleeping, or performing Salaah or reciting the Holy Qur'an."*

Our response to these comments is as follows:

(1) The claim of unanimity of the Ulama of the Salf and Khalaf on the *Istihbaab* (preferability) of loud Thikr gatherings is misleading and baseless. There is no such unanimity. If there had existed this alleged unanimity, there would not have been this severe difference prevailing in our ranks in this age as well as in previous ages.

(2) The only 'proof' which the thirteenth century Allaamah Tahtaawi adduces is the unsubstantiated arbitrary claim of the 10th century Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh). Since Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh) was a follower of the Shaafi' Math-hab, he must have been referring to Shaafi' Ulama.

However, the Ahnaaf are not subordinate to the rulings of the Shaafi' Ulama.

(3) The very principle of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), viz., the *"Asal in Athkaar is Ikhfa' and raising the voice with Thikr is bid'ah"*, refutes the alleged unanimity on the permissibility, in fact *Istihbaab,* of collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid. The action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), expelling the group who had engaged in this form of Thikr in the Musjid, also debunks the claim of unanimity postulated by Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh).

The Qur'aanic command to engage silently in Thikr and dua, is in diametric contradiction of the claim of Allaamah Sha'raani (rahmatullah alayh). Imaam Maalik's outright denunciation of such gatherings in the Musaajid rebuts the claim of unanimity. It is a fanciful imagination that has presented the figment of unanimity of the Ulama of all times on the preferability of collective loud Thikr gatherings in the Musaajid. There is absolutely no basis for this claim. All the Ulama who have made an in-depth study of this issue, are constrained to concede the existence of severe difference of opinion even on the plain question of the permissibility of loud Thikr, not collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid.

(4) The views stated in Haashiyah Tahtaawi cannot override the verdicts of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and innumerable other Fuqaha.

(5) If there appears to be a conflict of the views of comparatively junior Ulama with the verdicts of the Sahaabah and Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, the views of the junior Ulama will be appropriately reconciled and interpreted. If such reconciliation cannot be achieved, the views of the juniors will be set aside without condemning them if they are among the Ulama-e-Haqq. Note: 'Junior' in this context is in comparison with the likes of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen in general.

(6) How is it conceivable for the existence of consensus of the Ulama of all times on such a severely contentious issue fraught with the perils of bid'ah, as the collective Thikr performances in the Musaajid, when even Allaamah Tahtaawi himself registers difference of opinion of the Ulama on even the question of the *afdhaliyyat* of Thikr – whether Thikr-e-khafi or Thikr-e-jahr is superior? It is a sweeping, unsubstantiated claim which is palpably inaccurate.

(7) The implication that prevention of such Thikr gatherings in the Musaajid comes within the purview of the Qur'aanic aayat: *"And who can be more oppressive than him who prevents (others) from remembering the Name of Allah in the Musaajid?"*, is absurd. Bid'ah is prevented in the way in which Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) prevented the perpetration of the bid'ah form of Thikr in the Musjid. Prevention of such unsubstantiated forms of Thikr which are fraught

with the perils of bid'ah is not prevention from Thikrullaah in the Musaajid.

(8) If a man without wudhu sits reciting the Qur'aan Shareef in the Musjid, and the Qur'aan Majeed is snatched from him while he is expelled and ordered to take wudhu, it will be ignorance to aver that the man is being prevented from taking the Name of Allah Ta'ala in the Musjid.

The views expressed in Haashiyah Tahtaaawi cannot be presented as *daleel* for the claim of legitimacy of the collective loud Thikr programmes conducted in the Musaajid for the public gallery.

QAADHI KHAAN AND BAZZAAZIYYAH

Regarding the conflicting versions narrated in these Fataawa kitaabs, the Mufti Sahib writes: *"However, a question arises here that Qadhi Khan who is highly regarded by the Fuqahaa has stated that it is undesirable to raise one's voice when making zikr. Similarly Bazzaaziyyah has quoted from the kitab Khaaniyyah that it is prohibited to raise the voice when making zikr. How then can it be permissible to raise one's voice when making zikr? The answer to this is that Qadhi Khan has himself in another place given the permissibility of raising one's voice when making zikr in the following words: 'There is nothing wrong to raise one's voice when reciting Subhaanalla and Laa-ilaaha illallahu, etc.' Thus we can balance the two statements of Qadhi Khan in this way that where reference to raising the voice was prohibited, it is referring to Jahr Mufrit (to scream when making Thikr), not just to merely making loud zikr. This*

is also supported by a statement in Fataawaa Khairiyyah………. Or it could mean that loud zikr is prohibited at such times where zikr is established from the Ahaadeeth but it is not appropriate to raise one's voice. For example, to recite the Thanaa or similar duas aloud in Salaah which ought to be recited softly."

Exceptionally far-fetched and baseless interpretations have been adduced in the endeavour to bolster the bid'ah public Thikr programmes. Firstly, these differences cited by the Mufti Sahib himself, debunks the consensus theory mentioned in Haashiyah Tahtaawi. The severity of the *ikhtilaaf* (difference) on the issue of just *individual Thikr-e-jahr*, not the *Ijtimaai'* performances of those who incline to collectivism and populism in even such sacred acts which primarily have to be executed in solitude and privacy in view of the fact that ibaadat is communion of the bandah with his Maalik, has constrained the Mufti sahib to produce the far-fetched *ta'weel* mentioned in Fataawa Khairiyyah, and it has also induced him to fabricate his own fanciful interpretation which he outlines in the penultimate sentence of his comments which have been reproduced above.

Let us examine this legless *ta'weelaat* (interpretations), step by step.

(a) Allaamah Al-Kurduri (rahmatullah alayh), the author of Fataawa Bazzaaziyyah, was an Aalim of note of the 8th century Hijri. The author of Fataawa Qaadhi Khaan was a notable Aalim of the 7th century.

(b) Any view of these noble Ulama who appeared many centuries after *Khairul Quroon,* which conflicts with the *Usool and Juziyaat* of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, especially Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and his Ashaab, may not be presented as a basis for abrogating the unambiguous and well-known and well-established Fataawa of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

(c) The correct methodology to adopt when tackling such conflicts, is to present an interpretation which reconciles the conflicting views of the later Ulama with the Fataawa of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. It should not be the other way around which countenances such interpretations which render the verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen subordinate and subservient to the views and practices of the Khaanqah Sufiya and of such Ulama who are caught up in environments in which such questionable practices predominate.

It is, therefore, highly inappropriate to drag the sacred principle of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) from its lofty pedestal with the *jahr-e-mufrit* interpretation, or worse, with the Mufti Sahib's own 'new' interpretation, to make it subordinate to the opinion of permissibility expressed in Bazzaaziyyah.

The principle enunciated by Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) is clear and crisp, devoid of ambiguity. Its applicability to *jahr mutlaq*, without the restriction of *jahr mufrit,* is affirmed by the *Siyaaq and Sabaaq* (tenor and context) in which great Fuqaha of far loftier status than Bazzaaziyyah, etc., have applied it. Allaamah Ibnul Humaam, the illustrious Commentator of Hidaayah, states with great clarity in his *Fathul Qadeer:*

"The qaul of those (Ulama) who have issued the fatwa on the version of Saahibain is in conflict with the demand of (the principle of) Tarjeeh (preferring between conflicting views), for verily, the difference of opinion (of Saahibain with Imaam Abu Hanifah) in this regard (that is regarding Takbeer-e-Tashreeq) pertains to Takbeer with raised voice, not to Thikr per se (Nafs-e-Thikr). And, the Asal in Athkaar is Al-Ikhfa' and Al-Jahr is bid'ah. Thus, when the two views conflict, then the aqal (lesser number of days) will be preferred."

At this juncture our concern is not the actual mas'alah of Takbeer-e-Tashreeq. The issue of the topic is the *'Asal' – the Principle which unequivocally declares the superiority of Ikhfa' and the bid'ah of jahr.* It is noteworthy, that while Saahibain (Rahmatullah alayhima) differ with Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) regarding the number of days when reciting the Takbeer audibly is permissible, they do not differ with him on the Principle. While Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) says that reciting the Takbeer *bil jahr* is not permissible, Saahibain (rahmatullah alayhima) say that it is permissible. The *ikhtilaaf* is not on the issue of *jahr-e-mufrit.* The difference pertains to *jahr-e-mutlaq.* The one view states that normal moderate *jahr* on the occasion of the days other than the Day of Nahr, is not permissible while the second view claims it to be permissible. Thus the argument of *jahr-e-mufrit* in this context is baseless. There is unanimity on the principle of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh).

The quagmire of *ikhtilaaf* and far-fetched untenable interpretations in which the votaries of bid'ah practices are mired is the consequence of side-stepping or

wantonly ignoring the Principles and even the Particulars *(Usool and Juziyaat)* of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The later Ulama are therefore plunged into an unenviable dilemma in the arduous task of differenting between Haqq and Baatil.

This *Thikr bil jahr* quagmire is so perplexing that Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh), after recording the array of differences and interpretations on this issue, dejectingly states in his *Sabaahatul Fikr: "These are the views of our Ashaab. Just look at the manner in which their opinions clash (and differ). Some among them say that it (mutlaq jahr) is permissible; some say that it is haraam; some say that it is bid'ah; some say that it is Makrooh. The Asah (most authentic) is that it is permissible as long as it does not transgress the limits. This view (of permissibility) has been adopted by Al-Khairul Ramali."*

This plethora of *Idhtiraab* (conflict and confusion) is the effect of non-conformity – not adhering to the Usool of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and trying to validate practices which cannot be legitimized on the basis of the *Usool* of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. While the venerable Mufti Sahib has a penchant for citing from *Sabaahul Fikr* of Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh), the scope of his penchant proscribes acknowledging Maulana Abdul Hayy's conclusion of *Idhtiraab*. His 'rationale' for this convenient expurgation of Maulana Abdul Hayy's comment is understandable. After all, the Mufti Sahib is in the arduous and unenviable quest of *'dalaa-il'* to fabricate a non-existent 'consensus' on a non-issue for structuring a valid basis for his pet collective loud Thikr programmes offered for

the consumption of the public in the Musaajid and perhaps elsewhere.

Obviously it cannot serve the Mufti Sahib's agenda to cite Maulana Abdul Hayy's coment of *Idhtiraab*. Any such 'error' by the venerable Mufti Sahib will buffet into oblivion the 'consensus' claim and conundrum stated in Haashiyah Tahtaawi.

A claim of consensus made by anyone on this highly tendentious issue is conclusively debunked by the quagmire of differences on the subject of *Thikr bil Jahr*.

(d) It is most significant and should be salubrious for the venerable Mufti sahib, that the entire discussion in the whole of the treatise, *Sabaahatul Fikr fil Jahr bith Thikr*, centres around such *Thikr jahr which is NOT jahr-e-mufrit*. All the differences of opinion are related to *jahr-ghair mufrit or jahr mutlaq*. The *jahr-e-mufrit* interpretation fabricated to assign into the shadows or even into oblivion Imaam Abu Hanifah's Principle is an exceptionally flabby, in fact baseless argument which has spawned the considerable *Idhtiraab* which has perplexed Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) as well as numerous other Ulama.

(e) Neither the interpretation of *jahr mufrit* tendered in Fataawa Khairiyyah nor the Mufti Sahib's own fabrication to strike a synthesis between the conflicting versions appearing in the same kitaab which he has mentioned, is a valid reconciliation *(Tatbeeq)* nor are these centuries later interpretations products of Wahi. They are fundamentally and wholly products of the human mind and severely flawed in view of the diametric

clash with the pronouncement of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and our Fuqaha in general.

Moreover, we are not under any Shar'i obligation to submit to such machinations of the human minds – such opinions which conflict and even ignore or eliminate the *Usool* of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen who are the ultimate limits of our Ilmi trajectory. No Muqallid possesses a licence to traverse or transgress this sacred Limit.

(f) The endeavour to interpret the self-contradiction in Qaadhi Khaan for the purpose of reconciliation creates a greater conflict. And that is, a conflict with the Mujtahid Imaam to whom Qaadhi Khaan, Bazzaaziyyah and Tahtaawi are subservient. Rather than these unauthorized and irrational interpretations, it will serve the Mufti Sahib magnanimously to emulate Allaamah Ibnul Humaam (rahmatullah alayh) who upholds the *Asal* of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) in refutation of those Ulama-e-Haqq who had issued a Fatwa on the *qaul* of Saahibain which in turn conflicts with the verdict of Imaam A'zam (rahmatullah alayh).

If a dispute is argued rationally, without bias, and within the ambit of the principles and particulars of the illustrious Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen, there will be no resultant quagmires, perplexity and *Idhtiraab*.

There is also no expediency to justify and defend the Khaanqah practices in a way which produces a clash with the verdicts of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen who were the highest Repositories of the Shariah after the Sahaaba-e-Kiraam (ridhwaanullaahi alayhim) nor is there a need for the proponents on the other side of the divide to

criticize such practices. The permissibility of the Khaanqah practices is derived from another source and structured on another basis which is unrelated to Imaam Abu Hanifah's *Asal* circumscribing *Thikr-e-jahr*. By stating the Shariah's ruling on the acts of *jahr and khafi,* the intention is not to decry and outlaw the Khaanqah practices of the Auliya and the Mashaaikh whom we all follow and emulate, and of whose Spiritual Tree we all are branches.

(g) The *ibaarat* (text) in Qaadhi Khaan pertaining to the permissibility of raising the voice with Tasbeeh and Tahleel is stated in the context of an individual who visits a public bathroom. If the place is clean and there is no person displaying any part of his satr, then it is permissible for a man to audibly engage in tasbeeh and tahleel, provided he is not in the state of undress. This permissibility concerns an individual who recites to himself, not to the public gallery. This permissibly is not to be extended to the type of public performances which the venerable Mufti Sahib is so vehemently promoting. As for the public acts of collective loud Thikr in the Musaajid, the following principles are imperative for the obtainal of a Shar'i Ruling:

- Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Masood's action
- Imaam Abu Hanifa's Principle
- Imaam Maalik's categorical claim that the Sahaabah and Taabieen did not adhere to such collectivism and populism

- The principle of *Sadd-e-Baab and Sadd-e-Tharaai'* (Closing the Avenue of corruption and blocking all means which create bid'ah)
- The explicit statements of our Akaabireen as opposed to their Khaanqah practices.

(h) If an appropriate interpretation for reconciling the conflict with the principle of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen is not forthcoming, then the alternative is to set aside the view of Bazzaaziyyah and Qaadhi Khaan so that adherence to the verdict of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen is affirmed.

(i) There is a well-known principle in Fiqah: *"When the arguments are conflicting, then both fall away."* In the light of this principle, the conflicting statements in Qaadi Khaan fall away, and *amal* on the verdict of Imaam Abu Hanifah is automatically affirmed.

(j) There is also another well-known principle: *"When there develops a probability (of another view), then the istidlaal (deduction) is null and void."* The *jahr-e-mufrit* interpretation of Fataawa Khairiyyah, and the Mufti Sahib's own personal opinion which he presented as an addendum to the *ta'weel* of Fataawa Khairiyyah, are not the effects of *Nass*. Since these interpretations are not corroborated by Wahi, the probability of error is overwhelming. In fact, these interpretations which compromise the *Asal* of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) are fallacious. In view of the probability of gross error, the *istidlaal* of the Mufti Sahib is *baatil*.

(k) The venerable Mufti Sahib has extracted selectively certain statements from Bazzaaziyyah and Qaadhi Khaan, which he opined served the cause of promoting the collective loud Thikr programmes in the Musaajid. Apart from the fact that the statements cited by the Mufti Sahib have no bearing on the bid'ah *Ijtimaai' Thikr* performances since these cited views pertain to only permissibility of audible Thikr for individuals, the Mufti Sahib has perpetrated chicanery in his selective citation. Honour demands that the full text or the other view also expounded by the same authority from which support is drawn, be presented. But the Mufti Sahib's manner of selectivity is tantamount to *Kitmaanul Haqq (Concealment of the Truth).*

The Mufti Sahib, drawing from Fataawa Bazzaaziyyah, states: *"According to Fataawa Bazzaaziyyah it is permissible to raise one's voice when making zikr just as it is permissible to raise one's voice when calling out the Azaan or when delivering a lecture."*

This statement appears at the end of Bazzaaziyyah's discussion on raising the voice with Thikr. Hence, the Mufti sahib cannot plead unawareness or an oversight in having refrained from presenting the full argument of Bazzaaziyyah. In the interests of objectivity and for those who are desirous of gaining the Haqq, we reproduce the full text of Bazzaaziyyah:

"And it is reported in Fataawa Qaadhi that raising the voice with Thikr is haraam. *(Note: it has not been said 'undesirable' as the venerable Mufti Sahib alleged. Surely, the Mufti Sahib is aware of the difference between*

haraam and undesirable!) **And, verily, it has been authentically established from Ibn Mas'ood that he heard of a group who had gathered in the Musjid, and they were audibly reciting Laa-ilaha illallaah and Durood on Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). He then went up to them and said: 'We did not practise this during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). I therefore, do not consider you, except as innovators.' He persisted in this averment until he expelled them from the Musjid."**

Commenting on this action of the great Sahaabi, the Author says: "If you (O Reader!) say that it is mentioned in Al-Fataawa that *Thikr bil jahr* even in the Musjid will not be prevented to ensure that one does not come within the scope of the aayat of Allah Ta'ala, viz., *'Who is more unjust than the one who prevents from the Musaajid that Allah's Name be recited therein.',* but the action of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) contradicts your statement, then I say: If expulsion from the Musjid was executed literally, then it is probable on account of their belief that their act was ibaadat, and so that the people be taught that it (their collective Thikr) is bid'ah. A permissible action can become impermissible because of an accretion."

It is noteworthy that the Mufti Sahib has deemed it appropriate to observe total silence regarding Qaadhi Khaan's affirmation of the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). While the Mufti Sahib had painfully, but abortively, struggled to invalidate the authenticity of the Hadith, Qaadhi Khaan affirms its authenticity. And, while the Mufti Sahib presents a weak view of permissibility mentioned in Qaadhi Khaan, he dismisses the very strong view of *hurmat* stated by

Qaadhi Khaan, and also supported by the Hadith of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Furthermore, Bazzaaziyyah does not present the *jahr-e-mufrit* argument to neutralize the action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) nor does he deny the authenticity attributed to the Hadith by Qaadhi Khaan. On the contrary, he presents an interpretation to reconcile Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's action with the Qur'aanic aayat (mentioned above). The reasons which Bazzaaziyyah attributes for the motivation of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), namely, the idea of non-ibaadat being regarded as ibaadat, and the danger of bid'ah in unsubstantiated practices, exist to a far greater degree in the collective public performances of our current age of moral corruption, ignorance and spiritual bankruptcy.

We might just as well add, that there is no need to attempt reconciliation between the action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) and the Qur'aanic aayat. The exercise of the interpretation is superfluous. This eminent Sahaabi was not acting in any way in conflict with the Qur'aanic aayat. He stated unambiguously that the reason for his action was that this type of collective Thikr performance was not part of Ibaadat during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), and that their deed was bid'ah.

Preventing the perpetration of haraam and bid'ah in the Musjid cannever be equated to preventing people from Thikrullaah in the Musjid.

The same Qaadhi Khaan from which the venerable Mufti Sahib extracts the statement: *"There is nothing wrong to raise one's voice when reciting Subhaanallaah*

and Laa-ilaaha illllah", to bolster the bid'ah collective practices, authenticates the narration of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) which is a bone in the throat of innovators. The question of an individual reciting *Subhaanallaah* audibly, is a non-issue whereas the expulsion of a group from the Musjid is a major issue. Yet the Mufti Sahib thought it expedient to refrain from commenting on Qaadi Khaan's accredition of the Hadith which he (the Mufti Sahib) had arduously laboured to invalidate.

The action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is a major issue of pivotal importance in the discussion of collective loud Thikr programmes in the Musjid. In the attempt to bestow credibility to such bid'ah acts, it devolved as an incumbency on the venerable Mufti Sahib to rationally, with *Shar'i dalaa-il,* neutralize Qaadhi Khaan's accredition. Since he has failed in this task, it is not lawful for him to cite Qaadhi Khaan in support of the cause of collective Thikr he (the Mufti Sahib) is advocating and defending.

FATAAWA HINDIYYAH

The venerable Mufti Sahib also tenders Fataawa Hindiyyah in his support. Thus he says:

"In Fataawa Hindiyyah it is stated that there is nothing wrong if a group of people have to collectively and loudly recite Subhaanallah and Laa-ilaha illallah etc. in the presence of a judge. From the above statement we gain proof of the permissibility of loud and collective zikr."

The recitation in front of a judge is indeed an abnormal practice. Ibaadat is not executed in the presence of a judge. There surely must have been some underlying

reason for coupling this type of Thikr with the presence of a judge. Anyhow, even if making such Thikr collectively in front of a judge is permissible according to Fataawa Hindiyyah, Imaam Abu Hanifah's Ruling cancels the permissibility.

The Mufti Sahib has also dishonourably concealed the correct text of Fataawa Hindiyyah. On this issue, the following appears in Fataawa Hindiyyah: *"A big concourse has gathered by the Qaadhi. They all together raise their voices with Tasbeeh and Tahleel. There is nothing wrong with this. However, **Ikhfa' is afdhal.**"*

The crowd which has gathered by the Qaadhi, ostensibly for some mundane need, on seeing the judge, spontaneously exclaims: *'Subhaanallaah! Laa ilaha illallaah!* This is not a gathering of Thikr. The people merely exclaimed their happiness at seeing the Qaadhi. If one sees something beautiful, and one exclaims: *'Subhaanallaah!'*, it will not be a Thikr session. Similarly, when *'Alhamdulillaah!'* is exclaimed on sneezing, it will not be said that the sneezer is engaging in a Thikr session.

The Mufti Sahib has scraped the bottom of the barrel in his arduous search for 'proofs' for the bid'ah collective loud Thikr public performances.

Furthermore, Fataawa Hindiyyah explicitly refutes the Mufti Sahib's contention of *jahri Thikr* being superior. ***"Ikhfa is afdhal"*** is stated with emphasis in the very same sentence from which the Mufti Sahib has selected the 'Thikr' in front of the Qaadhi.

Again, the Mufti Sahib very conveniently casts a blind eye on the very next sentence which belies his claim of the preferability of loud Thikr over silent Thikr. While

the statement selectively extracted from Fataawa Hindiyyah by the venerable Mufti Sahib is not related to a Thikr session, the very next statement which he ignores, is the Fatwa which Fataawa Hindiyyah issues on the issue of loud/silent Thikr. Thus, it is said in Fataawa Hindiyyah: *"And, if they gather for the Thikr of Allah Ta'ala, Tasbeeh and Tahleel, they should recite silently."*

The Mufti Sahib's concealment of the Haqq is lamentable. While he abortively attempts to utilize a kitaab for his bid'ah cause, he ignores or conceals *all* the statements of that kitaab which refute his views.

Another significant fact stemming from the aforegoing fatwa of Fataawa Hindiyyah is that when people gather for Thikrullaah, *jahr* is not a requisite for the validity of a gathering. It is noteworthy that Fataawa Hindiyyah states that when people gather for Thikrullaah, they should recite silently.

Mullah Ali Qaari

Attempting to infuse life into his dead and fallacious arguments in favour of collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid, the Mufti Sahib alleges that although Mulla Ali Qaari has mentioned that 'according to some Ulama it is Haraam to raise one's voice when making zikr', he himself has advocated loud Thikr elsewhere in his kitaab.

Mulla Ali Qaari's view cannot override the categoric ruling of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), nor can it be cited in refutation of the emphatic ruling of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) who has explicitly stated: *"Raising the voice in the Musjid even with Thikr is haraam."*

The benefits of loud Thikr which the Mufti Sahib attributes to Mulla Ali Qaari are not valid for refuting the prohibition of bid'ah. These benefits, imagined or real, cannot be cited in refutation of the official position of the Hanafi Math-hab. The Hanafi view on loud Thikr is presented very strongly in *Badaai-us Sanaa'* where it is said that the *Asal* according to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) is *Ikhfa'* while *jahr* is *bid'at* except in cases explicitly ordered by the Shariah. Reference to this has already been made earlier on.

The quagmire of conflicts and uncertainty in which Mulla Ali Qaari found himself, constrained him to acquit himself with trepidation. Illustrating the uncertainty of Mulla Ali Qaari on this issue, Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) states in his *Sabaahatul Fikr:* "Some of his statements in Sharhul Hisnil Haseen incline to permissibility (of Thikr-e-jahr) although some of his statements in other places refute it."

THE INTERPRETATIONS

After presenting the case of those who espouse the cause of *Thikr bil jahr*, Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) states the view of the Maaliki Math-hab:

"According to Imaam Maalik and his Ashaab (the Maaliki Fuqaha), all these acts (of Thikr bil jahr, gathering in the Musjid for Thikr, audible tilaawat in the Musjid, etc.) are Makrooh (reprehensible, not permissible) because the Salf did not practise these acts, and to close the avenues (of bid'ah), and to eliminate substance for bid'ah so that there could be no accretion of any excess into the Deen, and no transgression of the clear Haqq takes place. Verily in our time there has developed what he (Imaam Maalik) and his Companions had feared."

(Sabaahatul Fikr)

Complement this strong and clear stand of Imaam Maalik with the verdict of Imaam Abu Hanifah and the Ahnaaf Fuqaha in general:

"The fundamental principle in Athkaar is *Khafi* (silent Thikr)."
"Rasing the voice in the Musjid, be it with Thikr, is haraam."
"Raising the voice with Takbeer is bid'ah."
"The Sunnah in Athkaar is *Mukhaafatah* (i.e. silence)"

These are all the statements of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) who was the epitome of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

These explicit rulings of the early Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen such as Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) have pummelled into a quandary the later Ulama and the Mufassireen who appeared on the scene centuries after these illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The Mufassireen and the Ulama, centuries after the advent of these great Fuqaha, were confronted with an apparent conflict between the rulings of these Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and many Ahaadith which indicate the permissibility of *Thikr bil jahr*. Despite these Ahaadith, the great Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen ruled to the contrary and outlawed *Thikr bil jahr*.

Some Ulama, including Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) proffered flabby interpretations in an endeavour to strike a reconciliation between the rulings of these Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and the Ahaadith. Hence, Maulana Abdul Hayy states in his *Sabaahatul Fikr: "It is clear that those (Fuqaha) who say that jahr is haraam, mean jahr-e-mufrit. They have deducted this from Rasulullah's statement: "Have mercy on your souls". And, you (O reader!) are aware that the circumstances which occasioned this instruction was in relation to jahr-e-mufrit., not to jahr in general Furthermore, how can hurmat (prohibition) be established on the basis of Khabr-e-Aahaad (a lower category of Ahaadith) which is among the Adillah Zanniyyah (i.e. such proofs which are not absolute in authenticity to preclude the slightest vestige of doubt)."*

This interpretation is incorrect for the following reasons:

(1) Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), in declaring *Thikr bil jahr* forbidden, did not relate it to *jahr-e-mufrit.* There was absolutely no need for him to have made an ambiguous reference to *jahr-e- mufrit* for the sake of applying the verdict of *hurmat.* The prohibition of *jahr-e-mufrit* was and is universal. All authorities are unanimous in proclaiming *jahr-e-mufrit* to be *haraam.* The Fuqaha who were his Students, e.g. Imaam Abu Yusuf (rahmatullah alayh), Imaam Muhammad (rahmatullah alayh) and innumerable others had no contrary view. Thus, when Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) declared: *"The Asal in Athkaar is Khafi",* the other Fuqaha did not contest this verdict.

The term *'khafi'* which Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) mentions in this principle was not stated in opposition to *jahr-e-mufrit.* It was stated in refutation of *mutlaq jahr (audibility in general).* There is no valid basis for the assumption that he had directed the *hurmat* to only *jahr-e-mufrit,* thereby excluding moderate *jahr.*

If the intention was truly *jahr-e-mufrit,* Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) would have stated so with clarity, and not cast the issue into the limbo of ambiguity and uncertainty. He had evolved a Principle, and the principle has clarity.

(2) The contention that the 'daleel' of the Hadith: *"Have mercy on your souls",* indicates that Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) related the *hurmat* to *jahr-e-mufrit* is baseless and erroneous in view of the fact that he did not state this principle in the context of any act of Thikr which was being enacted with *jahr-e-mufrit.* Imaam

Sarakhsi in his *Al-Mabsoot,* Allaamah Kaasaani in his *Badaaius Sanaa'i,* and numerous other Fuqaha in their respective kutub of Fiqah, cite the principle of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) as his *daleel* in the context of reciting audibly Takbeer Tashreek on the occasion of Eidul Fitr. While according to Imaam Abu Yusuf (rahmatullah alayh) and Imaam Muhammad (rahmatullah alayh), the Takbeer should be recited audibly along the route to the Musalla (Eidgah) during both Eids, Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) ruled that the Takbeer should not be recited audibly on the occasion of Eidul Fitr. *Badaaius Sanaa'i* explains the rationale of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) as follows:

"For Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) is the narration of Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu)..........and because the Asal in Athkaar is Ikhfa' except where there is a (Shar'i) determinant (which orders jahr)."

The *Ikhtilaaf* (difference of opinion) between Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and Saahibain (rahmatullah alayhima) is not on the issue of *jahr-e-mufrit.* In other words, Neither do the Saahibain claim Takbeer on Eidul Fitr is permissible with *jahr-e-mufrit* nor does Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) present his conflicting opinion on Takbeer with *jahr-e-mufrit.* The difference here is palpably on the issue of mutlaq *jahr.* While Saahibain says that Takbeer audibly *(jahr mutlaq)* on Eidul Fitr along the route to the Musalla is permissible, Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) states that Takbeer even with moderate *jahr (i.e. not jahr-e-mufrit)* is not permissible because it is in violation of

the principle: *'The Asal in Athkaar is Ikhfa'*. The principle is not related to *jahr-e-mufrit.*

This further clarifies that the context in which Imaam Abu Hanifah's *daleel* is proffered is not related to any exercise of *jahr-e-mufrit.*

(3) The claim of Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) regarding *Khabr-e-Aahaad* is untenable. For the *hurmat (prohibition)* of *jahr ghair mufrit (i.e.mutlaq jahr),* Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) did not base his case on *Khabr-e-Waahid.* He structured the prohibition on Qur'aanic verses and further enhanced the prohibition with Ahaadith. Explaining Imaam Abu Hanifah's *daleel,* Allaamah Kaasaani (rahmatullah alayh) states in his *Badaaius Sanaai': "According to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh): Verily, raising of the voice with Takbeer is bid'ah in terms of the Asal, for verily, it (Takbeer) is Thikr, and the Sunnah in Athkaar is mukhaafatah (silence) by virtue of the statement (aayat) of Allah Ta'ala: 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and silence, and because of Rasulullah's statement: 'The best Dua is the silent dua.".............. Therefore amal will not be abandoned on account of the universality (umoom) of the Qaul of Allah Ta'ala: 'And, call unto your Rabb with humility and silence."*

The claim of *hurmat* based on *Khabr-e-Waahid* is therefore incorrect.. Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) had faltered on this issue by virtue of his erroneous assumption that Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) had directed the prohibition to *jahr-e-mufrit* whereas he (Imaam Abu Hanifah) related it to *jahr mutlaq.* Relating

it to *jahr-e-mufrit* in the context in which the *daleel* was structured is meaningless.

Furthermore, when a Mujtahid Imaam cites a Hadith as his *Mustadal*, the issue of *Isnaad* is not of importance because the very acceptance of a Hadith for *Istidlaal* by a Mujtahid is the accredition of that Hadith. Thus, the *Khabr-e-Waahid* argument is untenable in this context.

(4) The other error in Maulana Abdul Hayy's interpretation is his question: *"How is it possible for hurmat (of jahr mutlaq) to be established on the basis of Khabrul Aahaad which are Zanni Adillah?"*

In this averment, Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) has made the following conclusion:

* The Hadith pertaining to the *'the best of Thikr being silent Thikr'*, is *Khabr-e-Waahid,* hence unsuitable for issuing the *hukm of hurmat* on its basis. We have already mentioned above that Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) had structured the *Hurmat* on the basis of *Kitaabullah* as his primary *Daleel.* Secondly, the argument of *Khabr-e-Waahid* is not valid here. It is an accepted principle that when a Hadith has met the criterion of *Talaqqi bil Qubool* by the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, then that narration is a valid *Mustadal* for whatever *Hukm* the Mujtahid raises on its basis. Therefore, in this regard, Maulana Abdul Hayy's contention is not valid.

(5) Furthermore, the Hadith cited by the Hanafi Fuqaha is not the primary *Mustadal* of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh). It has already been mentioned above

that the primary basis is the Qur'aanic verse. The Ahaadith on *Thikr-e-Khafi* are confirmatory evidence.

(6) In his presentation of the case of the votaries of *Thikr bil jahr (i.e. mutlaq jahr, which is moderate audibility)* not screaming and shouting which constrain walls of Musjids and Khaanqahs to vibrate and echo, Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) proffered dozens of Ahaadith on the basis of which is substantiated audible Thikr.

A question of extreme importance develops at this stage. Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) together with his Ashaab and Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) together with his Ashaab were very close to the age of *Risaalat.* Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) had the honour of linking up with some Sahaabah while Imaam Maalik was the Student of great Taabieen who had acquired their Ilm from great Fuqaha among the Sahaabah. Were these illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen then unaware of the dozens of Ahaadith which extol *Thikr bil jahr*? It is indeed extremely far-fetched, in fact inconceivable, to conclude that these illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen who were also great Muhadditheen in proximity to the era of *Risaalat* were blissfully unaware of these dozens of Ahaadith.

Rationality constrains all unbiased persons to believe that Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and all their Fuqaha Students, were fully apprised of the couple of dozens of Ahaadith which the votaries of *Thikr bil jahr* present in substantiation of their contention of *Jawaaz.* Any suggestion that Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and

Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) were unaware of the several dozen Ahaadith mentioning *Thikr bil jahr* will be beyond the ambit of credulity. An added reason for the incredulity in relation to any suggestion of unawareness of Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh), is the fact that he was an inhabitant of Madinah Munawaarah, and Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had given advance notification of his erudition in the firmament of Shar'i Uloom.

Furthermore, Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) was a famous and a greater Muhaddith than Imaam Bukhaari (rahmatullah alayh). These illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were fully aware of all the Ahaadith pertaining to *Thikr-e-Jahr*.

(7) The first reason for Imaam Maalik's refutation of all kinds of *Thikr bil jahr* practices is: *"The Salf did not practise these acts."* In relation to Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh), the *Salaf* were the Sahaabah and the Taabieen. In this categorical claim, Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) outrightly refutes the validity of even *mutlaq jahr* because it was not the *amal* of the Sahaabah and the Taabieen.

Now when such an august and illustrious personality as Imaam Maalik unequivocally states that the Sahaabah and Taabi-een did not practise *Thikr bil jahr*, then tendering the opinions of Ulama who appeared on the scene 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 centuries after the era of the Sahaabah is improper, and untenable. The opinions and interpretations of such Ulama cannot override the explicit rulings of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

The second reason for the prohibition stated by Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and his Ashaab is: *To close the avenue of bid'ah and to eliminate the source of the energy which fuels bid'ah.* Acts of ibaadat which were not in vogue during the era of the Sahaabah and Taabieen, inevitably culminate in bid'ah sayyiah. The limits of *Ibaahat* (permissibility) are transgressed and the innovated practices are elevated to the status of Sunnah and even Wujoob. Even those authorities who believe in the permissibility of *Thikr bil jahr* concede this fact.

When illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen of the calibre of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) had so diligently and forcefully closed the avenue of bid'ah, what constrains the venerable Mufti Sahib to attempt a forceful opening up of the door of bid'ah with his collective loud public Thikr performances in the Musaajid?

For all these reasons, it is quite obvious that the interpretation proffered by Maulana Abdul Hayy (rahmatullah alayh) is incorrect.

ALLAAMAH SUYUTI (RAHMATULLAH ALAYH)

The venerable Mufti Sahib has endeavoured to extravagate substance for his collective Thikr programmes from the views of Allaamah Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh). Notwithstanding the erudition of Allaamah Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh) and his lofty status in the sphere of the Knowledge of the Shariah, he was not in the category and class of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and their Ashaab. Furthermore, Allaamah Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh) appeared on the Islamic horizon nine

centuries after the Sahaabah. The Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were the Fuqaha of the first century of Islam.

It is impudence to present the views of Allaamah Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh) in refutation of the verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The Authorities of the Shariah, who are the ultimate limits for the Ilmi trajectories of the Muqallideen Ulama and Fuqaha are the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. Allaamah Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh), nine centuries later, did not possess the entitlement to set aside the verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, override them and present Ahaadith in refutation of their rulings. No one, until the Day of Qiyaamah, will ever possess such a licence regardless of how lofty a status he may acquire in Ilm and Taqwa.

The personal opinion and views of Allaamah Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh) are of no interest nor of any substance if these are in conflict with the verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The votaries of the bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid have no respect and regard for even the explicit Shar'i verdicts of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen whose Math-hab they ostensibly purport to follow. They should not expect us to be subordinate to the opinions of Ulama who appeared many centuries after the era of the *Khairul Quroon*, when such opinions take no cognizance of the rulings of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen.

MA-AARIFUL QUR'AAN

The venerable Mufti Sahib avers: *"In Ma'aariful Qur'an this verse is explained as follows: The benefit of appointing Hazrat Haroon (Alaihis Salaam) as a minister and partner in the prophethood of Hazrat Musa (Alaihis*

Salaam) was so that they could collectively remember Allah."

The Mufti Sahib has truly descended to an extremely low and baseless level in scrounging for 'proofs' to justify the bid'ah collective Thikr performances. What relationship does the appointment of Nabi Haroon (alayhis salaam) as a Nabi subordinate to Nabi Musaa (alayhis salaam) have with the bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances in public venues? Did Hadhrat Musaa (alayhis salaam) and Hadhrat Haroon (alayhis salaam) execute any Thikr performance for the gallery? Did they engage in the type of bid'ah enactment which the Mufti Sahib is promoting? This 'argument; is another example of the drivel type of 'proof' which clutters the discussion of the Mufti Sahib.

The Mufti Sahib has dug out from Ma-aariful Qur'aan this absurd 'proof' for his public Thikr programmes despite there being nothing in common to justify a comparion, while he conveniently ignores Ma-aariful Qur'aan's direct reference to *Thikr bil jahr* and the like. Regarding loud Thikr, Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi; (rahmatullah alayh) says in his Ma-aariful Qur'aan: *"With regard to the Mashaaikh-e-Chisht among the noble Sufiya who instruct the Mubtadi (beginner) with Thikr-e-jahr, it is by way of ilaaj (treatment), taking into consideration his condition, so that indolence and indifference (ghaflat) would dissipate with the jahr, and an affinity with Thikrullah develops in his heart. In reality, even according to them Chishti Mashaaikh), jahr in Thikr is* ***not desirable*** *despite it being permissible. Furthermore, its permissibility in terms of the Hadith is conditional with absence of riya."*

True to form, the venerable Mufti Sahib overlooked this tafseer since it does not serve his collective loud Thikr agenda.

CASES OF THE CONTENDERS

In the mas'alah of *Thikr Bil Jahr* there are three contenders.

* The first group contents that as long as the Thikr is not with *jahr-e-mufrit* (screaming/shouting) all forms of loud Thikr, whether individual or collective, private or public, substantiated by the Sunnah or unsubstantiated, are permissible.
* *Thikr bil jahr* is *afdhal* (superior) and more beneficial than *Thikr-e-Khafi.*
* The second group contends that both *Thikr bil jahr* provided it is not *jahr-e-mufrit* and *Thikr-e-Khafi* are permissible.
* *Thikr-e-Khafi is afdhal.*
* The third group contends that *Thikr-e-Jahr* in general *(alal itlaaq)* is prohibited except such practices of *jahr* explicitly ordered by the Shariah, e.g. Athaan, Iqaamah, Talbiyah, Takbeer-e-Tashreeq and Khutbah.

Almost the entire case of group one is erroneous. They have no case in the Shariah except in their contention of *jahr ghair mufrit* for the individual in privacy. Everything else besides this exception is baseless.

This group relies on the personal opinions of Ulama who appeared many centuries after the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, and on khaanqah practices which on the admission of the khaanqah Mashaaikh are temporary remedial measures to treat spiritual ailments. They ignore the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, override the rulings of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen and believe themselves to be qualified in 'ijtihaad'. Hence, they resort to the Ahaadith,

interpreting and misinterpreting the narrations to hammer out a basis for their bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances.

It is this group which opens the avenue for bid'ah sayyiah. It is this group which operates in the shadows of those who had joined the Khawaarij sect in the rebellion against the Sahaabah. It is this group whose spiritual fathers,. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had branded *'Mubtadieen'* and had them expelled from the Musjid. They have no valid *daleel* for their bid'ah practices.

The second group has a valid case and strong *dalaa-il* to substantiate its claim. The only difference it has with the third group, is that the question of *afdhaliyyat* (superiority/ of greater merit) does not develop in the view of the third group because this latter group proscribes *Thikr Bil Jahr entoto* except where the Shariah has explicitly issued its decree.

The third group also has strong *dalaa-il* to validate its claim, but it recognizes no *afdhaliyyat* in view of the belief that *jahr alal itlaaq* is forbidden. There is therefore no other category of Thikr which could be the subject of comparison to produce the superiority of one kind. Although this group accepts the validity of *jahr* for the explicit Shar'i exceptions such as Athaan and Talbiyah, they have confined the exceptions to an extremely narrow area. The exceptions are only Athaan, Iqaamah, Talbiyah, Qiraa't in the Jahri Salaat, Takbeer Tashreeq, Khutbah and any other explicit exception made by the Shariah.

These exceptions are based on Imaam Abu Hanifah's principle of *Daleel-e-Mukhassis* which shall soon be explained, Insha'Allah. The error of this group is in the misconception that the *Daleel-e-Mukhassis* applies to only the limited few explicit Shar'i exceptions whereas there is wide scope for the application of the principle of *Daleel-e-Mukhassis*. And Allah knows best.

THE VIEW OF THE SECOND GROUP

The view of the second group is, in our opinion, the path of rectitude. Their *dalaa-il* are the strongest, rational and supported by the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The position of this group is recapped as follows:
(1) The Qur'aanic verse which mentions *'less than jahr"*, the Hadith, *"Have mercy on your souls."*, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ordering Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) to lower his voice while making Tilaawat, and similar other Ahaadith explicitly prohibit *jahr-e-mufrit.*

(2) The fact that the aforementioned *Nusoos* were directed at *jahr-e-mufrit* is ample evidence for the permissibility of *jahr ghair mufrit.* While prohibiting excessive loudness, moderate audibility was clearly permitted. Thus, the two forms of Thikr are confirmed as permissible – *Thikr-e-Jahr ghair mufrit* and *Thikr-e-Khafi*.

(3) The Qur'aanic verses commanding humility and silence when making Thikr and the Hadith narrations explicitly stating the superiority of silent Thikr (these have already been discussed) validate the contention of the *afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr-e-Khafi.*

DALEEL MUKHASSIS

This is the principle of exclusion from a whole. The Shariah issues its decree *(Hukm)* to apply to all situations for example. However, certain members or acts which constitute part of the whole are excluded from the effect of the decree. Such exclusion from the decree of the Shariah is valid and permissible only if the Shariah itself is the determinant *(Daleel-e-Mukhassis).*

For example: Qur'baani of sheep and goats is valid and permissible. All goats and sheep come within the scope of this decree. However, the Shariah itself has excluded goats and sheep whose tails are cut. Qur'baani of such tailless animals is not permissible or valid. The exclusion is based on a Shar'i decree, not on our rationality.

Similarly, according to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) the Shariah orders the Takbeer to be recited audibly from Fajr on the Day of Arafah until Asr on the Day of Nahr (10th). Thereafter, reciting it audibly is not permissible. Explaining the operation of this principle, Allaamah Kaasaani (rahmatullah alayh) states in his *Badaaius Sanaa':*

"According to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) raising the voice with Takbeer is primarily bid'ah because the Sunnah in Athkaar is Khafi (reciting inaudibly) by virtue of the Qaul of Allah Ta'ala: *'Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence',* and because Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"The best Dua is the silent Dua.'* Thus, this principle (of silent Thikr being the decree and loud Thikr being bid'ah) shall not be discarded except when there is a *Daleel-e-*

Mukhassis. There exists such a *Daleel* regarding (audible recitation of) Takbeer from the Day of Arafah until Asr Salaat on the Day of Nahr. That *Daleel* is Allah's Qaul (the relevant Qur'aanic verse)……… However, with regard to the days after the Day of Nahr, there exists no *Daleel-e-Mukhassis* in view of the differences of the Sahaabah, and the wavering of the Takbeer (i.e. reciting it audibly or inaudibly) between Sunnah and Bid'ah. Thus developed the doubt in the *Daleel-e-Mukhassis.* Therefore, *amal* shall not be abandoned on the *umoom* (general meaning) of the aayat: *'Call your Rabb with humility and in silence.'*. It is, therefore, clear that *ihtiyaat* (the precautionary measure) is in abandoning (the loud recitation of Takbeer after the Day of Nahr). *Ihtiyaat* is not in practising on it because, verily, discarding a Sunnah is better than practising on a bid'ah."

Ibnul Humaam (rahmatullah alayh) states in *Fathul Qadeer:* "The principle in Athkaar is Ikhfa' and Jahr is bid'ah. When there is a conflict between the two (types of narration pertaining to the Days of the Takbeeer), then the lesser number will be preferred (and this is the practice of Imaam Abu Hanifah – rahmatullah alayh – which Ibnul Humaam has endorsed by rejecting the fatwa issued on the view of Saahibain)."

For the comprehension of readers, it is necessary to explain the view of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) on this issue. According to him, it is permissible to recite the Takbeer aloud after every fardh Salaat only from Fajr of the Day of Arafah until after Asr on the Day of Nahr which is the next day. In this mas'alah, Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) adopted the practice of

Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood. Our concern here is not to promote this particular practice of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) in view of the fact that the verdict of the Hanafi Math-hab on this issue is not on the view of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh).

The purpose of citing this example is only to explain the application of the Principe of *Daleel-e-Mukhassis.* Based on the same principle of *Khafi* being the primary decree in Athkaar, the Takbeer is recited silently along the route to the Musallaa on Eidul Fitr. There is no *Mukhassis* to exclude it from this universal principle.

All episodes of *Thikr bil jahr* by individual Sahaabah, which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not expressly command, but nevertheless condoned, come within the purview of the principle of *Daleel-e-Mukhassis.* Thus, in view of the fact that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had permitted individual Sahaabah to engage in *Thikr-e-jahr,* it has to be accepted that such permission is the *Daleel-e-Mukhassis* for excluding individual practices of *Thikr-e-jahr* conducted in solitude, from the primary principle pertaining to *Ikhfa* in Thikr.

There are no cases of collective loud Thikr gatherings mentioned explicitly in the Ahaadith. From certain Ahaadith, inferences have been drawn. But inference does not create certitude. The *Shakk* (doubt) of error remains in an inference which is not the product of *Wahi.* On the contrary, it is the effect of the human mind in which there is no *Qat'iyyat* (Absolute Certitude). Hence, the principle of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) will apply, namely: *"When a practice wavers between*

Sunnah and Bid'ah, the Sunnah will be discarded." In such cases of uncertainty and conflicting views and inferences, the demand of the Shariah is to adopt *Ihtiyaat* which is in abandoning the imagined Sunnah/Mustahab to avoid committing a bid'ah.

Furthermore, there is the explicit declaration of Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) that such collective practices in the Musaajid were not practised by the Sahaabah and the Taabi-een. Added to this, is the principle of *Sadd-e-Tharaai'* (Closing the avenues for corruption) of Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh) and of the Fuqaha of all the Math-habs.

While there is *Daleel-e-Mukhassis* for *Thikr-e-jahr* practised by individuals in solitude, there is no such *Daleel* for the type of collective loud Thikr public performances advocated by the venerable Mufti Sahib. Apart from there being no *Daleel-e-Mukhassis* to exclude the public displays from the prohibition stated in the primary principle, there is explicit prohibition of such performances. This prohibition is the action of castigation and expulsion of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Complementing this *explicit prohibition,* are the many instances of prohibition by the Sahaabah of acts of 'ibaadat' which did not conform to the methods of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and which were criticized by the Sahaabah on the basis of the 'principle' of Rasulullah's Abstention, e.g. Nafl Salaat in the Eidgah, addition of Durood to the sneeze-dua, audible Tasmiah, audible Takbeer, etc.

All unbiased readers whose quest is the truth will understand from our discussion that the venerable Mufti Sahib has absolutely no case and no proof for bid'ah collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid. Those indulging in these unsubstantiated practices are opening up a wide avenue for entrenching bid'ah – Bareilwi type bid'ah sayyiah. May Allah Ta'ala bestow good hidaayat to all those innocently involved in furthering the plot of Shaitaan. *Bid'ah* is a dangerous trap which Shaitaan engineers with a subtlety which even Ulama fail to detect.

"And upon us is only to deliver the clear Message."
(Qur'aan)

CONSPECTUS OF THE DALAA-IL

The reader may feel lost and confused with the numerous arguments and counter-arguments scattered throughout this treatise. It is therefore prudent to compile in summary form all the *dalaa-il* (proofs) which substantiate the Shariah's *Ijmaa'* (Consensus) on the *afdhaliyyat* (superiority) of *Thikr-e-Khafi* (Silent Thikr).

These *dalaa-il* will also confirm the secondary nature of *Thikr-e-Jahr* (Audible Thikr), as well as the impermissibility of loud Thikr on certain occasions and instances.

(1) "It is Makrooh to make dua during the month of Ramadhaan when making Khatam of the Qur'aan, as well as when a group makes khatam of the Qur'aan (i.e. at any other time). Faqeeh Abul Qaasim As-Sifaar (rahmatullah alayh) said: "If it was not for the fear that the people of this city would say: *'He prevents us from dua'*, then most assuredly, I would have prevented them from it."

(Al-Muheetul Burhaani)

The reference is to congregational dua after khatam of the Qur'aan Majeed has been made.

Al-Muheetul Burhaani is a voluminous kitaab (25 Volumes) occupying a very lofty pedestal in Hanafi Fiqh. It was compiled by the fifth century Imaam Burhaanuddeen Abil Ma-aali Mahmood (rahmatullah alay). It is an elevated compilation consisting of the Masaa-il and their Dalaa-il of the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen such as Imaam Abu Hanifah, Imaam Abu Yusuf, Imaam Muhammad (rahmatullah alayhim) and others.

While the Compiler is of the fifth Islamic century, the Masaa-il are those of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen of the first Islamic century. Nothing can supersede the Rulings of these Ulama belonging to the highest echelon of Fuqaha after the Sahaabah.

(2) "If the *Muthakkir* (the lecturer) on the mimbar recites *Ma'thoor (Masnoon)* duas, (audibly) and the people follow him in reciting these (Masnoon) duas, then if the purpose is to teach them (how to recite the duas), there is nothing wrong. However, if the purpose is not for the ta'leem of the people, then it is Makrooh, for verily, doing so is bid'ah." (Al-Muheetul Burhaani)
The khutbah here does not refer to the Jumuah Khutbah. It refers to a lecture/bayaan.

(3) "Imaam Muhammad (rahmatullah alayh) narrated in *As-Siyarul Kabeer* from Imaam Hasan (rahmatullah alayh) that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) abhorred (regarded as Makrooh) raising the voice at the time of reciting the Qur'aan and at the time of the Janaazah.

Qais Ibn Ubaadah narrates that Ubaadah said: 'Verily, the Ashaab of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) detested (regarded as Makrooh) raising the voice by the Janaa-iz and at the time of Thikr.' In the Hadith of Hasan, instead of Thikr, the word, qiraa't of the Qur'aan is used. There is no conflict between the two because, verily, the term *Thikr* includes dua, tasbeeh, tahleel, wa'z and qiraa't of the Qur'aan. In fact, qiraa't of the Qur'aan

is the noblest of Athkaar. Allah Ta'ala says: 'And, the Thikr of Allah is the Greatest.' "

(Al-Muheetul Burhaani)

(4) "Verily, the Sunnah in duas is *Ikhfa'* ". (Al-Muheetul Burhaani)

(5) "If the meaning of raising the voice at the time of Thikr means dua, then most certainly is Makrooh, for verily, the *Asal* in duas is *Ikhfa'*, and also because in it (audibility) is *riya* (show/ostentation). Precisely for this is it Makrooh to raise the voice with tasbeeh and tahleel."

And, if the meaning of the word *Thikr* (in this context) is *wa'z* (lecture), then it does not mean the raising of the voice of the waa-iz (lecturer). It will mean the raising of voices by the audience with tahleel, tasbeeh and durood when the lecturer mentions the name of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Verily, it has been authentically narrated that it was reported to Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that a group of people had gathered in the Musjid, and they were reciting tahleel and durood on Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) while raising their voices. Then Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) went up to them and said: *"We did not practise this during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). I deem you to be mubtadieen (innovators).'* He continued repeating this until he expelled them from the Musjid."

And if the meaning of the word, *Thikr* (in this context) is reciting the Qur'aan, then verily, it is Makrooh to raise the voice with qiraa't."

(Al-Muheetul Burhaani)

(6) "*Jahr* with Takbeer is known by (the Nass of) the Shariah which is in conflict with the primary principle viz. *'Verily, the Asal in athkaar and ad-iyyah (duas) is Ikhfa'*.

(7) "It is narrated from Ash-Shaikh Imaam Faqeeh Abi Ja'far (rahmatullah alayh): 'I heard that verily our (i.e. the Ahnaaf) Mashaaikh regarded Takbeer Tashreeq (i.e. its recitation audibly) in the market-places bid'ah. And Allah Subhaanahu wa Ta'ala knows best."

(Al-Burhaanul Muheet)

(8) Allaamah Kaasaani (rahmatullah alayh) records in his *Badaaius Sanaai':* "According to Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), raising the voice with takbeer is bid'ah, for verily it is a Thikr, and the primary principle in athkaar is Ikhfa' by virtue of Allah's qaul: *"Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence"*, and by virtue of the qaul of Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): *"The best dua is the silent dua."*

Allaamah Alaauddeen Abu Bakr bin Mas'ood Kaasaani (rahmatullah alayh) was a Faqeeh of the fifth Islamic century.

(8) "Verily, *jahr* with takbeer is bid'ah." (Hidaayah)

(9) "Ibn Humaam said: 'The *Asal* in Athkaar is *Ikhfa'* and *jahr* is bid'ah." (Fathul Qadeer)

(10) "Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) said: *'Raising the voice with Thikr is bid'ah because it is in*

conflict with the qaul of Allah Ta'ala, viz., 'Make the Thikr of your Rabb in your heart with humility and silence, and with a voice less than jahr."

(Al-Khulaasah)

(11) "The takbeer shall not be recited audibly. The reason for this being: *"Verily, the Asal in Thikr is Ikhfa.', on the basis of the qaul of Allah Ta'ala, viz., 'Call unto your Rabb with humility and in silence', and because of the qaul of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): 'The best Thikr is Thikr-e-Khafi.'...........Verily jahr is in conflict with the Asal (Principle of Imaam Abu Hanifah)." (Ghaayatul Bayaan)*

(12) "Raising the voice with Thikr is haraam. Verily, it has been authentically reported that Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) heard that a group of people had gathered in the Musjid.......*(the same narration of innovators and their expulsion)."*

(Fataawa Qaadhi Khaan)

(13) "*Jahr* with takbeer is bid'ah at all times except on occasions of exceptions (made by the Shariah). And Qaadhi Khaan has categorically declared *jahr* with takbeer to be Makrooh, and the Author of Al-Musaffa has concurred (with him)." (Al-Bahrur Raai-q)

(14) "Tabari said: 'In it (the Hadith) is the Karaahat of raising the voice with Thikr and dua. And this is what the generality of the Sahaabah and Taabieen say.' "

(Irshaadus Saari of Qustulaani)

(15) “And according to what has been reported by As-Suyuti, Ibn Majah and Nisaai’ have also narrated this. This Hadith indicates that it is Makrooh to raise the voice with Thikr. Now even if it is not haraam, then at least it will not be less than Makrooh.” (Sabaahatul Fikr)

(16) “Imaam Maalik and his Ashaab said that all these acts (of jahr and congregation in the Musjid) are Makrooh because the Salaf (Sahaabah and Taabieen) did not practise these acts. (These practices are also Makrooh) so that the avenue and means for bid’ah remains closed to ensure that there be no excess in the Deen, and abandonment of the clear Haqq. Verily, that which Imaam Maalik and his companions had feared has assumed reality in our time.” (Sabaahatul Fikr)

(17) “In this Hadith is the indication for the permissibility of *jahr without doubt although Ikhfa’ is afdhal.”* – Shaikh Dahlawi in Sharhul Mishkaat. (Sabaahatul Fikr)

(18) “There is no doubt in the fact that *Sirr* (silence) is superior (afdhal) to jahr…….’ The Mustahab according to us (the Ahnaaf) is silence in Athkaar.” – An-Nihaayah (Sabaahatul Fikr)

(19) “The Hadith: *“The best Thikr is Khafi (silent Thikr)”,* indicates the afdhaliyyat of silent Thikr, and there is no dispute in this fact.” (Sabaahatul Fikr)

(20) “When the people recite takbeer (audibly) after Salaat, verily, it is Makrooh and bid’ah. When they recite

takbeer (audibly) in the Musaajid of the Ribaat when there is no fear (of the enemy), then it is Makrooh."
(Fataawa Hindiyyah)

(21) Qur'aanic recitation is Mustahab only if one person recites after another person has recited, not collectively as the Egyptians and Syrians have innovated. (One person should recite while the others should listen. Then another person should recite, and the others should listen.). Verily, Ibnudh Dhiyaa' from our Ulama has explicitly said that raising the voice in the Musjid even with Thikr is haraam." (Irshaadus Saari – Manaasik Mulla Ali Qaari)

(22) The aayat of the Qur'aan (in Surah A'raaf) is Nass for Ikhfa' being Mustahab. (Jaami' Li Ahkaamil Qur'aan of Qurtibi)

(23) Silent Dua is afdhal. Thikr-e-Khafi is afdhal. (Ma-aariful Qur'aan)

(24) Thikr jahr is permissible, but Thikr Khafi is Aula. (Kifaayatul Mufti)

(25) Ikhfa' in Dua is preferable (Mustahab).(Al-Mabsoot)

(26) "It has been deducted on the basis of this aayat that Ikhfa' in Thikr is afdhal. The Hadith narrated by Imaam Ahmad supports this. (Ruhul Ma-aani)

All Authorities of the Shariah from the time of the Sahaabah, are unanimous in having proclaimed the

afdhaliyyat (superiority and preferability) of *Thikr-e-Khafi.*

From the *Dalaa-il* on the issue being disputed, the following are the conclusions:
(a) The ruling pertaining to *jahr ghair mufrit* (moderate audibility – not shouting and screaming) varies between haraam and mubah (permissible). Some authorities say that it is haraam; others say, bid'ah; some say, Makrooh; some say permissible.

(b) According to the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen there appears to be consensus on haraam and bid'ah except where the Shariah has made exceptions. The exceptions are made by the determinant termed *Daleel Mukhassis.* Only Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had the right to make such exceptions, hence *Thikr bil jahr* individually in privacy is permissible.

(c) The plethora of differences which has created a quagmire in which many Ulama flounder, unable to arrive at a conclusion, exist among the Ulama who came many centuries after the age of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The unequivocal and unanimous view of *hurmat* (prohibition) has cast the later Ulama into a quandary. In the endeavour to be extricated from the quagmire, a variety of interpretations has been produced. Most, if not all, of these interpretations only serve to complicate the quagmire.

Most of the interpretations are untenable, both rationally and irrationally *(Aqlan wa Naqlan).* Some interpretations, e.g. the assertion that Imaam Abu

Hanifah's principle refers to *jahr-e-mufrit,* are absolute drivel irrespective of who fabricated it.

(d) There exists an incontrovertible consensus *(Ijma')* on the *afdhaliyyat* (superiority) of *Thikr-e-Khafi*. Whoever has ventured a contrary opinion has failed to crack or dent the Consensus. The contrary opinion of the stragglers is pure opinion devoid of Shar'i substance.

(e) All the Sufi Mashaaikh of the Four Silsilahs, despite their remedial and perculiar practices of jahr in their khaanqahs, are unanimous in upholding the *afdhaliyyat of Jahr-e-Khafi.*

(e) The view of *afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr-e-Jahri* propounded by Mufti Radhaaul haq Sahib is a palpable fallacy, and his view of the permissibility of collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaajid is a greater fallacy and in diametric contradiction of *all* the *Dalaa-il* of the Shariah. Such public performances are **bid'ah** and **haraam**.

THE SHAAFI' MATH-HAB

Regardless of the considerable flailing of their arguments by the collective loud Thikr group, the official and authoritative view of the Shaafi' Math-hab is on the *Istihbaab* and *Afdhaliyyat* of *Thikr-e-Khafi*.

"The Jamhoor Hanafi and Shaafi' Fuqaha have explicitly stated that *jahr with Thikr* is not Sunnat after Salaat. On the contrary, *Sirr* is. It is mentioned in Nisaabul Ihtisaab: 'If they recite takbeer aloud after

Salaat, it is Makrooh, for verily it is bid'ah except on the occasion of Nahr and the Days of Tashreeq.'

Ibn Bittaal and others have narrated that the Authorities of the (Four) Math-habs are unanimous that it is not Mustahab to raise the voice with Thikr. Imaam Shaafi' has interpreted this Hadith (regarding jahr) to mean that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had made jahr for a short while. He did not make jahr permanently."

(Sharhul Muslim, Ihkaamul Ahkaam,
Sabaahatul Fikr, etc.)

NOTE

Some Ulama have presented the view of *Thikr-e-jahr* being preferable in some instances. It should be noted that this preferability is confined to Thikr made in solitude. It is not related to Thikr in public places such as Musaajid. A person in the solitude of his home or in the wilderness is permitted to engage in *Thikr-e-jahr* which is not inordinately loud. This 'preferability' does not apply to Thikr made in the Musjid or anywhere in the public. The Khaanqah is in the category of a private venue.

Thikr-e-Khafi is mandatory in public places, hence Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) and the Fuqaha-e-Mutaqaddimeen explicitly and emphatically ruled:

"Raising the voice in the Musjid is haraam even if it be With Thikr."

SUMMARY

For easy grasping and comprehension of readers, it is best that we summarize the salient features of this treatise.

(1) The venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib, in his booklet, embarked on the exercise of proving the validity, permissibility and superiority of the *Ijtimaai'* (Congregational) loud Thikr practices performed in the Musaajid. This is bid'ah which is on the rise as a direct consequence of the practices of members of even the Deobandi School.

(2) In the endeavour to validate the public bid'ah performances, the Mufti Sahib was constrained to unnecessarily establish a basis for the permissibility of loud Thikr because such Thikr constitutes an integral ingredient of the public performances. Since there is hardly any opposition to *Thikr bil jahr per se,* the laborious efforts of the Mufti Sahib in his booklet are really superfluous and redundant.

(3) In his bid to prepare a basis for the public performances, the Mufti Sahib lost his bearings and irrationally and emotionally struggled to prove that loud Thikr is in fact superior and better than *Thikr-e-Khafi*. His opinion is in conflict with all the *Dalaa-il* of the Shariah.

(4) The Mufti Sahib has exceeded the bounds of propriety in scholary dissertation and presentation of rational and

Shar'i argument, by ignoring the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and the sacred Shackles of Taqleed which he purports to be donning. He has attempted to disprove the clear-cut and emphatic rulings of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen by looking over their shoulders, digging out Ahaadith and presenting the interpretations of Ulama who appeared centuries – 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 centuries after the era of the Sahaabah and Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. While these Ulama proffer a variety of interpretations, they generally are unanimous in the view that *Thikr-e-khafi* is fundamentally *afdhal.*

(5) The venerable Mufti Sahib has grievously erred in relying for 'proof' on the views of the centuries later Mufassireen and the Khaanqah practices. But none of these has any standing in the area of *Shar'i Dalaail.*

(6) It has been shown beyond any doubt in this treatise that the collective loud Thikr programmes conducted in the Musaajid are bid'ah, hence not permissible to participate in.

(7) The final word for the Muqallid, be he a Mufti A'zam or an Allaamatud Dahr or a Bahrul Uloom, or a Qutbuz Zamaan or a Saahib-e-Kashf wa Ilhaam, is the ruling of his Math-hab. The rulings of the Math-hab are not inferred and acquired from the practices of the Sufis in their Khaanqahs nor from the interpretations of centuries later Mufassireen, nor from the Muhadditheen such as Imaam Bukhaari, Imaam Muslim and others , all of whom have no status in relation to the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen who were the highest class of Fuqaha after

the Sahaabah. They occupied the loftiest stations in the firmament of *Ilm-e-Wahi* (the Knowledge of Revelation). Lamentably, the venerable Mufti Sahib had not deemed it appropriate to submit to these illustrious Souls.

His attitude of elevating the Mufassireen and the Khanqah practices and fixing these as his primary basis is deplorably inconsistent with the Mantle of Ilm.

CONCLUSION

- *Thikr bil jahr* (audible Thikr) in solitude and privacy is permissible.
- *Thikr bil jahr-e-mufrit* (shouting and screaming) even in solitude is not permissible'
- *Thikr-e-Khafi* (inaudible Thikr) is superior and better than audible Thikr.
- *Ijtimaa'i (congregational) Thikr* in the Musaajid is bid'ah, hence not permissible.

THIKRULLAAH – THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

"Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day are signs for the people of intelligence. They are those who remember Allah while standing, sitting and while lying on their sides, and they meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth." (Qur'aan)

"I have not created Jinn and Man, but that they worship Me (i.e. remember Me at every moment in every walk of life.)" (Qur'aan)

"Whoever diverts (his attention) from My Thikr, verily for him there is a constricted (difficult and distressed) life, and We shall resurrect him blind on the Day of Qiyaamah." (Qur'aan)

"Destruction for those whose hearts have hardened as a result of abstaining from Thikrullaah." (Qur'aan)

"And whoever refrains from Thikrullah, We appoint for him a shaitaan who becomes his constant companion." (Qur'aan)

"Verily in Thikrullah do hearts find rest." (Qur'aan)

"They (the true Believers) are such men who are not diverted from Thikrullaah by trade and commerce." (Qur'aan)

"Verily, the Thikr of Allah is the greatest." (Qur'aan)

"Then their bodies and their hearts mellow towards Thikrullaah." (Qur'aan)

"What! Has the time not arrived for the people of Imaan for their hearts incline with fear to Thikrullaah?" (Qur'aan)

"O People of Imaan! Do not let your wealth and your children divert you from the Thikr of Allah."(Qur'aan)

"O People of Imaan! Make the Thikr of Allah in abundance." (Qur'aan)

RASULULLAH (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) SAID:
"Your tongue should remain ever fresh with the Thikr of Allah."

"Everything has a polish. The polish of the hearts is Thikrullaah."
A Sahaabi asked: 'O Rasulullah! What is the best deed?' Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "That you depart from this world with your tongue moist with Thikrullaah."

Allah Ta'ala has created *Insaan* solely for His Remembrance. A human being bereft of Thikrullah is worse than the dumb animals. Every act of the Mu'min, including his mundane acts, are adorned with some form of Thikr to remind him of Allah Ta'ala. Man's sleep, waking up, washing, dressing, eating, working, walking,

and every single act of his entire life is regulated by Thikrullaah of some kind. From the cradle to the grave, his life is in the glare of Thikrullah.

The Mu'min enters this earthly abode with Thikrullah infused in him, and he departs from this world with Thikr on his tongue. The era in between birth and death, is one lengthy duration of Thikrullaah, that is, if he understands that he is a Mu'min. Hence, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"Every person who is obedient to Allah is a Thaakir."*

In this Hadith we are informed that the Mu'min is a perpetual Thaakir. His every minute is engaged in some form of Thikr, be it verbal Thikr, Thikr of the heart or practical Thikr of the body. Apart from the Thikr of the tongue and the heart or the mind, is the Thikr of the body. Just as it is expected that the tongue and heart of the Mu'min remain in a state of perpetual Thikr, so too is it imperative for the body as a whole, to be constantly engaged in Thikrullaah.

Verbal Thikr, is Thikr of only one limb, namely, the tongue. Thikr of the tongue is supposed to influence the whole body so that it acts in harmony with the demand of verbal Thikrullaah. That demand is obedience to Allah Ta'ala in every aspect, in the minutest detail as demonstrated and commanded by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Thus, when an evil attracts and lures a Mu'min, he/she turns and walks away. This act of shunning the evil is the effect of Thikrullaah. Remembering that Allah's displeasure will be courted by indulgence in the evil, the Mu'min's entire body responds to this Thikr and walks away from the evil. If it was not for his remembrance of

Allah Ta'ala, never would he have mustered up the courage to restrain the animal instincts of the nafs.

The unbeliever is bereft of every vestige of Thikrullah, hence there is no restraint on the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the limbs of the body and the mind. Whatever the bestial nafs commands, the unbeliever is ever ready to give expression to such demands.

The complete and total submission to Allah Ta'ala which the Shariah demands is possible only if constant and perpetual Thikr has been inculcated in the Mu'min. It is only a vivid perception of Allah Ta'ala and the transcendental realties which can deter a person from evil, transgression and disobedience. To achieve this goal, Allah Ta'ala has designed our mundane life in a manner which fosters and ingrains constant remembrance of Allah Ta'ala.

The prescriptions of Thikr are numerous and are offered in the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. It is imperative for the Mu'min's success and salvation in both worlds that he becomes an embodiment of Thikrullaah. The most important medium for inculcating enduring and permanent remembrance of Allah Ta'ala is the tongue. Constancy of verbal Thikr ingrains the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala in the heart. When both the tongue and heart harmoniously engage in Thikrullah, *Insaan* becomes the epitome of virtue. His every breath then is transformed into Thikr. Thikrullah becomes his life's breathing, just as Tasbeeh is the life-sustainer of the Malaaikah.

The Khaanqahs were the places where the Mu'mineen in the past acquired the capacity for permanent Thikr – for constant and perpetual Thikr of the tongue and heart. One vital requisite for the development of the enduring

state of Thikr of the tongue and heart is *Islaah (reformation) of the nafs*. This was in former days perfected in the Khaanqah.

The Athkaar and Ashghaal practices of the Khaanqah were designed by the noble Mashaaikh to morally purify the Searcher of Allah and to inculcate in him the state of constant and perpetual Thikr by means of which he may gain Divine Proximity and the special *Nisbat* (Bond) which every Mu'min is supposed to have with his Creator. The Athkaar and Ashghaal were short-cut routes for this attainment. Hence, the Mashaaikh instructed their mureedeen in these practices as a means, not as a goal *(Maqsad)*. The khaanqah practices were never designed as acts of ibaadat nor was the intention that they should replace the Masnoon acts of ibaadat – Nafl Salaat, Nafl Saum, Tilaawat and verbal Thikr in abundance and with constancy – Thikr as taught by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Unfortunately, the Khaanqah system has died. There are no longer true khaanqahs. The 'khaanqahs' of this era have become transformed into venues of bid'ah, nazam-singing, poetry, feasting and merrymaking. The so-called mashaaikh of the age themselves are in a quandary. They have no true understanding of the meaning of a khaanqah. Islaah of the Nafs has been entirely overshadowed despite this being the primary function of the khaanqah.

In the absence of true Khaanqahs, the need is to revert to the actual athkaar formulae shown by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). These are such forms of Thikr which are acquired directly from the Shaikhul Mashaaikh – the Shaikh of all Shaikhs – namely, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). For practising

these athkaar, there is no need for any other sheikh. These are such forms of Thikr which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has imposed on every member of the Ummah.

THE SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME

Some Masnoon forms of Thikr and Shaghl will now be explained, Insha'Allah.

(1) For enhancing the quality of Thikrullaah, Tahaarat is an essential requirement. Therefore, the Seeker of Allah Ta'ala should endeavour to be perpetually with wudhu. When wudhu breaks, apply pressure on the nafs and renew the wudhu so that you constantly remain under the special Rahmat of Allah Ta'ala. When both the body and the heart are pure – purified of all physical impurities and spiritual impurities (sin and futility), then the special *Anwaar (rays of noor)* which perpetually cascade from the Arsh of Allah Ta'ala will find a ready receptacle in your heart wherein to settle.

(2) Memorize all the short Masnoon Duas which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has instructed to be recited for every act. The Dua for eating, sleeping, dressing, leaving the home, entering the home, and the myriad of other short Masnoon Duas which encompass our entire life's activities, both mundane and spiritual, should be memorized. Until such time that you have not memorized all the Duas, recite *Bismillaah* when beginning any and every act.

(3) Punctually and regularly perform Tahyatul Wudhu, Ishraaq Salaat, Dhuhaa (Chaasht) Salaat, Awwaabeen and Tahajjud Salaat. Occasionally perform Taubah Salaat.

(4) Make Sadqah an integral part of your daily life. Give as you can afford even if it is one slice of bread. Never

abandon Sadqah because you cannot afford to give a large sum of money. Allah Ta'ala looks at the niyyat, not at the amount.

(5) Without fail engage in Tilaawat of the Qur'aan Majeed daily. Fix your own quota of Tilaawat, and gradually increase it. Allah Ta'ala gives greater taufeeq when His bandah struggles along.

(6) Occasionally perform Salaatut Tasbeeh.

(7) Recite *Istighfaar* – any form of *Istighfaar* – at least 100 times daily.

(8) After Fajr Salaat recite Surah Yaaseen; after Zuhr, Surah Al-Fatah; after Asr, Surah Naba'; after Maghrib, Surah Waaqiah, and after Isha', Surah Mulk.

(9) After every Salaat, recite Aayatul Kursi and Tasbeeh Faatimi.

(10) Every night, devote a few minutes to solitude and meditate on the day's deeds and misdeeds, and on Maut and Qabr. Prescribe your own time duration for this *shaghl.* Even five minutes of daily meditation will prove vastly beneficial.

(11) Keep the tongue constantly engaged in Thikrullaah – any form of Thikr – *Laa-ilaha illallaah, Allahu Allaah, Subhaanallaah, Allaahu Akbar, or any of the Asmaaul Husna.* It is essential that the tongue remains perpetually engaged in Thikrullah whether walking, sitting, lying

down, working and in every walk of life. This is the perpetual Thikr which is Waajib, and which is commanded by the Qur'aan and Hadith.

(12) If you have time available and you desire to practise more Thikr and Shaghl, then understand that the best and spiritually most efficacious forms of Thikr and shaghl are Nafl Salaat, Tilaawat, Istighfaar and Durood Shareef. No one, especially in this corrupt era of spiritual bankruptcy when true Mashaaikh of Tareeqat are no longer available, requires any Thikr or shaghl formula other than Nafl Salaat and Tilaawat of the Qur'aan Shareef. There are no superior athkaar and ashghaal to these Masnoon acts of ibaadat which were the primary acts of Thikr and shaghl of the Sahaabah.

ABSTENTION FROM SIN

This Act of the spiritual programme cannot be exaggerated as much as one may endeavour. Abstention from sin and futility has priority over Nafl acts of ibaadat. Sin and even futile acts which may initially be lawful are extremely harmful for moral reformation and spiritual advancement. The spiritual efficacy and benefits of athkaar and ashghaal are laid to waste by sin and futility. It is therefore imperative to exercise extreme caution in this regard.

Control of the eyes and tongue, reduction in association with people, abstention from over-eating and extreme care in the type of food you ingest are all vital for the acquisition of *Roohaaniyat* (spiritual fibre) and Divine Proximity. A person who is careless of the food he consumes will never progress up the spiritual ladder. He

will simply retrogress incremently into moral and spiritual corruption. Haraam and Mushtabah food are fatal spiritual poisons.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SUNNAH

The completion and perfection of the spiritual programme depend on meticulous observance of the Sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to the best of one's ability. In every aspect of your daily life, implement the Sunnah whether these are of the Mustahab or Aadaab category. All Sunnats regardless of how 'insignificant' they may appear to our spiritually corroded hearts and minds, bring much *noor* into our lives.

This concise moral and spiritual programme comprising of only Masnoon ingredients is adequate for the spiritual needs of everyone in this age. May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the taufeeq of Istiqaamat (steadfastness) on *Siraatul Mustaqeem* and may He grant us a beautiful Maut with the tongue fresh with Thikr right until the very last moment when the *Rooh* makes its exit from this ephemeral worldly abode. *Aameen! Ya Rabbal Alameen.*

MASNOON ATHKAAR

There are numerous forms of Thikr prescribed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). All forms of Masnoon Thikr are highly beneficial and efficacious. Any of these forms may be adopted and practised. You could devise your own Thikr programme by selecting from the variety of Athkaar some of which are reproduced hereunder:

(1) Recite 41 times.

يَاحَيُّ يَاقَيُّوْمُ لَآاِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ اَسْئَلُكَ اَنْ تُحْيِيَ قَلْبِيْ بِنُوْرِ مَعْرِفَتِكَ اَبَداً يَا اللّٰه

(2) Recite اَللّٰهُ اَللّٰه 500 times after Zuhr.

(3) After Asr recite

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ اِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ

100 times.

(4) After Maghrib recite اَللّٰه as much as you wish.

(5) After Isha', recite the following Istighfaar 70 times or 100 times

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ ○ اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ الْعَظِيْمَ الَّذِيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ وَاَتُوْبُ اِلَيْهِ

(6) In all states, while walking, sitting, lying down, working, etc. constantly recite لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ

(7) Every morning and evening, recite Surah Ikhlaas, Falaq and Naas, each one thrice.

(8) Recite the last Ruku' of Surah Baqarah every night.

(9) يَاذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ Recite as much as you wish.

(10) يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ Recite as much as you wish.

(11)

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ يُحْيِىْ وَيُمِيْتُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

Recite as much as you wish.

(12)

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَاللهُ اَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيْمِ۔

Recite as much as you wish.

(13) سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ Recite as much as you wish.

(14) سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ
Recite as much as you wish.

(15)
سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ الْعَظِيْمَ وَأَتُوْبُ إِلَيْهِ

Recite as much as you wish.

(16) سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ
Recite as much as you wish.

(17)
سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَلَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ
وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيْمِ

Recite as much as you wish.

(18) Durood Shareef should be recited daily as much as one wishes. It takes only six minutes to recite Durood Shareef 100 times.

Everyone should prescribe for himself/herself a programme of Thikr consisting of Nafl Salaat, Tilaawat, Istighfaar, Tasbeeh, Tahleel and Dua. Remember that the ***Best and most rewarding method of Thikr is the Silent Thikr.*** Besides keeping the tongue engaged in constant Thikrullaah in all walks of life, it is also necessary to sit in solitude for some time daily for Thikrullaah.

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that on the Day of Qiyaamah among those who will be granted sanctuary in the Shade of the Arsh will be such people who engaged in Thikrullaah, silently, in solitude and tears flowed down their cheeks.

BID'AH IS A CONTAGIOUS MALADY

Public Participation of Women

"And, remain steadfastly in your homes, and do not make an exhibition (of yourselves) such as the displays of jaahiliyyah of former times."
(Qur'aan)

Although those Molvis and Shaikhs who indulge in public congregational thikr programmes are well aware of the mas'alah pertaining to *Khurooj-e-Nisaa'* (emergence of females from their homes), they intentionally cast a blind eye at its prohibition. Iblees has adorned for them with fanciful arguments and imagined benefits the participation of women in their public thikr *('jikri')* programmes. With scandalous short sightedness, they entice women to leave their homes to grace their *jikri* gatherings conducted in public venues. Many Ulama and Mashaaikh had become the victims of shaitaan's snares which are described as *Talbees-e-Iblees.*

When learned men transgress the limits of the Shariah and justify such divergence with their superficial *hikmat'*, their intelligence and soul become blighted. The spiritual blindness constrains them to descend further into the evil rut of justifying bid'ah practices on which there exist conspicuous *dalaa-il* of prohibition *(hurmat)'.*

The prohibition of women emerging from their homes is explicit, and there exists *Ijma'* (Consensus) of all authorities of the Shariah on this prohibition. The emphasis of this prohibition is such that women are not permitted to visit the Musaajid for even the Fardh Salaat despite the fact that this was permissible during the time

of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). However, during the age of the Sahaabah, women were prohibited from visiting the Musaajid. Similarly, they are banned from visiting the Qabrustaan.

Notwithstanding this fourteen century prohibition, we find Molvis and sheikhs who organize public bid'ah thikr programmes, extending this bid'ah practice to even females. In the wake of luring them out of their homes under Deeni and 'jikri' guise, they compound the initial prohibition with several other haraam elements. Thus when women are invited and urged to participate in public *jikri* programmes, the following haraam elements are perpetrated:

(1) Emergence from the home. This is strictly prohibited by the Qur'aanic and Hadith *Nusoos*. It is in conflict with the *Ijma'* of the Ummah.

(2) Women in droves, come to the 'jikri' venue driving cars despite the fact that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) cursed (invoked *la'nat* on) women who are in the 'driving seat'.

(3) The Curse of Allah and His Malaaikah. When women emerge into the public for reasons which are not valid in the Shariah, the *la'nat* of Allah Azza Wa Jal and of the Malaaikah descends constantly on them as long as they are outside the holy precincts of their homes.

(4) Many women attend the 'jikri' programmes in violation of the wishes of their husbands. The Divine *la'nat* overtakes such husbands who condone and permit their wives to emerge from the home for participation in these bid'ah 'jikri' programmes.

(5) The sheikh who engages in the 'jikri' programme for the pleasure of the gallery, is affected by Iblees. He

becomes a victim of the deception known as *Talbees-e-Iblees*. Instead of the thikr being done with humility and silence purely for Allah's Sake, the misguided sheikh being conscious of the presence of the female crowd, adorns his 'thikr' and his 'dua' to impress the ladies in waiting.

(6) The congregational loud bid'ah thikr of the males in the nearby venue is relayed to the female crowd by an intercom-system. Thus, the ladies, who are naturally stupid and dim in their brains, sway in 'ecstasy', labouring under the impression that their souls are soaring into hitherto unknown spiritual realms of elevation. Meanwhile, their nafsaani emotions are being stirred and kindled by shaitaan who remains in constant attention at their side. As soon as the melodious chorus of the male 'jikri' crowd ends, the emotions of the ladies are deflated. The whole ostentatious show of the 'jikris' is full of bid'ah sound and fury signifying nothing but *nafsaaniyat*,

(7) The public, loud dua of the sheikh transmitted over the intercom-system is adorned with extra nafsaani paraphernalia to impress the ladies, rendering the sheikh sahib guilty of riya and the 'lesser shirk', which is 'ibaadat' enacted to impress others. The wailing and crying of the sheikh over the loudspeaker system while making his dua, are deceptions to impress the crowds. Dua, according to the Qur'aan and Sunnah, are silent affairs – private affairs – between the slave and Allah Ta'ala. This mannerism and method innovated by the 'jikri' sheikh is alien to Islam, alien to the Sunnah and alien to the tareeqah of all our Mashaaikh of all Four Silsilah.

(8) Entering and leaving the public venue the females are invariably exposed to males who come to collect their errant females participating in the 'jikri' pantomime.
(9) Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had ordered that even domesticated animals should be kept indoors during the delicate time of Maghrib. It is a time when the shayaateen emerge in droves and wander around searching for victims to ensnare in their webs of fitnah and corruption. Instead of the females remaining indoors during this time to cater for the needs of their husbands and children, they prowl outside to attend the programmes of the 'jikris'. They return after Isha in violation of the *huqooq* of their husbands and children.

The bid'ah of loud congregational thikr has now extended to the females as well. In diametric conflict with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, the 'jikri' sheikhs are entrenching a number of evils in Muslim society, especially among females, with their bid'ah practices. Little do they realize that shaitaan is gradually sucking them into the vortex of his snare with women. On the occasion when shaitaan was expelled from the heavens, he supplicated for a number of things. One of his supplications was his request for 'traps' with which he could ensnare the people of worship. Allah Ta'ala informed him that his traps would be women.

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that he had not left behind him a greater fitnah for men than women.. In every era the true Mashaaikh of Tasawwuf have always warned their compatriots to beware of association with females. Among the snares of *Talbees-e-Iblees* the most potent for ensnaring the Ulama and

Sufiyya are the traps of females and young lads. Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali (rahmatullah alayh) narrated that Hadhrat Yusuf Bin Husain (rahmatullah alayh) said: *"I have seen the calamities befalling the Sufiya who are in association with lads, companionship with aliens and showing tenderness towards women."*

Shaikh Waasti (rahmatullah alayh) said: *"When Allah Ta'ala desires to disgrace a servant, he casts him to these noxious persons and carrion."*

Hadhrat Muzaffar Qarmeeni (rahmatullah alayh) said: *"The worst tenderness is to show tenderness to women, be it in any way whatsoever."* This is a warning for the Mashaaikh and Sufiya to be alert and maintain a very safe distance from females. The warning here does not refer to husbands/fathers being tender and kind to their wives/daughters. The Sufiya have to exercise extra caution. Shaitaan entices them with women and young lads. He entraps them with females with ostensibly Deeni stratagems such as presiding over *'jikri'* sessions in which women participate.

The nafs is a subtle ustaadh of *sharr* (evil). The sheikh's entire ibaadat of dua and thikr is despoiled with his endeavour to impress the ladies with his 'jikri' programmes. The 'jikri' sheikhs becoming unduly and suspiciously affectionate to their female disciples. Hence, the Mashaaikh have described such association as rot and carrion. The little *roohaaniyat* which the sheikh may have acquired is in entirety eliminated by inclining tenderly towards females. Such inclination is nothing other than sexual lust which shaitaan adorns for the sheikh.

Many Sufiya were ruined when they relaxed their guard and fell prey to the deceptive whisperings of

shaitaan and the lustful promptings of the carnal nafs. With subtle arguments of *'hikmat'* and ostensible stratagems of *'jikri ibaadat',* many sheikhs of Tasawwuf fell from the sublime heights of spirituality into the dregs of moral and spiritual ruin. Some even committed suicide and murder at the end of their 'tether' of immorality disguised as 'ibaadat' by shaitaan. Some Sufiya despite their sincerity, mujaahadah and ibaadat, were extremely deficient in the *Ilm of the Shariah.* Others again, were of shallow understanding and extremely short-sighted. They thus failed to discern the snares of shaitaan. They became entangled in the web of *Talbees-e-Iblees,* and brought everlasting ruin to themselves in consequence of transgressing the limits of the *Zaahiri Shariah.* They became enslaved to the nafs and under the veneer of their *'hikmat'* they perpetrated their nafsaani evil until it overwhelmed them.

The Mashaaikh unanimously proclaim that the safety of man in general, and of the Ulama and Sufiya in particular, is in rigid adherence to the prescribed limits of the Shariah which is possible only by submission to the Sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). It is therefore imperative to abandon all *'jikri'* bid'ah programmes.

Shaitaani Ecstasy

Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali (rahmatullah alayh) narrated an episode of profound admonition for the Sufiya, Mashaaikh and Ulama. Once a Shaikh who was lax in his relationship with his female mureeds, indulged in fornication with one of his female disciples in the midst of his *haalat (state) of wajd.* While

the duped sheikh laboured under the impression of his soul soaring in the celestial and angelic realms during his thikr, he grabbed his female disciple and fornicated with her in that very state of 'spiritual ecstasy'. The 'spiritual ecstasy' was in fact a snare of *Talbees-e-Iblees* which had brought this ruin to the sheikh.

When the sheikh indulges in 'jikri' relationship with females, he is guilty of throwing overboard all caution. Shaitaan lies in ambush and utilizes the female trap to bring lasting ruin and disgrace to the sheikh.

Note: In Pakistan there is a deviant sect whose members subscribe to beliefs of kufr and practices of bid'ah thikr. They are known as 'Jikri'. This appellation appears to be an appropriate title for those who indulge in bid'ah forms of 'thikr'. Since their bid'ah acts are not pure thikr, it is best to refer to them as 'Jikri'

AN ANECDOTE OF SHAITAANI TALBEES

THE RUIN OF BARSEESAH

Barseesah was a Raahib (Buzroog) during the time of Bani Israaeel. He had renounced the world and had devoted himself to the ibaadat of Allah Ta'ala. He was the most pious saint in Bani Israaeel. During his time there were three brothers who had one young sister. The three sons planned to join a Jihaad expedition. However, they were concerned about their sister. They had no relatives with whom they could leave their sister. They did not trust anyone. Finally they decided to leave her in

the care of Raahib Barseesah. They held him in the highest esteem.

They approached Barseesah and requested that he takes custody of their sister until they return. Barseesah refused and sought refuge with Allah Ta'ala from them and from their sister. But, the brothers pleaded with him. Finally, Barseesah submitted to their appeals and instructed them to leave their sister in the room which was opposite his *sauma'ah* (place of worship).

Every day Barseesah would descend from his ibaadat khaanah to leave food for her outside the door of his *sauma'ah*. He would then lock the door of the sauma'ah and ascend the stairs. From inside he would call the girl and she would come to collect her food. This continued for quite some time.

Then Shaitaan began with his talbees. He started to whisper into the heart of Barseesah that the girl's emergence from her room was improper. People passing by would see her, and perhaps some evil man would even molest her. He then developed the idea that it would be better if he left the food at the door of her room. That would be even more rewardable by Allah Ta'ala. This *'logic'* whispered into his heart by Shaitaan appealed to Barseesah. He would then place the food at the door of her room without speaking to her. Some time went by in this manner.

Then Iblees approached him with exhortations of virtue and reward. The argument developed in his mind that if he placed the food inside her room, it would be better. This logic appealed to him. He submitted to this ploy of Shaitaan and for some time thereafter he would deliver the food inside the room.

Iblees then whispered into him: 'She is extremely lonely and scared of living all alone. She will be comforted if at least you say a few words of naseehat (advice) to her. However, he would not speak to her inside the room. He would speak to her from the window in his sauma'ah which was upstairs. Then Iblees whispered that it would be better if he descended from his sauma'ah and spoke to her from outside the door of his sauma'ah. Thus, he submitted to this satanic 'logic' and daily sat outside by the door of his place of worship and conversed with her while the girl sat outside by the entrance of her room. By this time mutual conversation had become the norm, and this pattern continued for quite some time.

Iblees then tempted him to go a step further. Barseesah began sitting near to her by the entrance of her room. Iblees, pursuing his pernicious plot, whispered to him that it is more in conformity with modesty if he sat inside the room to converse with her so that passers by do not see her. Barseesah by this time was fully in the clutches of Iblees. He submitted to the satanic logic and would spend the whole day talking with her inside her room. At night time he would leave, ascend into his sauma'ah, and engage in ibaadat.

Talbeesul Iblees had thoroughly eroded the spiritual fibre of Barseesah. Now the process leading to the ultimate act of fornication was quite simple for Iblees. Soon Barseesah committed fornication and the girl became pregnant. She gave birth to a baby boy.

Now came Iblees again and whispered to him: 'What will you do when her brothers return? You will be utterly disgraced and punished. The best option is to kill the

baby and bury him. And, this is what Barseesah did. He murdered the baby.

After he had killed the baby, Iblees again appeared to him and said: 'She has seen what you had done with her baby. Do you think that she will conceal this from her brothers? It is best that you kill her as well so that your deeds remain a secret. Submitting to the shaitaani command, Barseesah killed the girl. Then he threw her body and the body of the baby in a pit and covered it with a huge slab of stone. Then he ascended into his sauma'ah and once again engaged in worship.

When finally the brothers returned, they came to fetch their sister and questioned Barseesah about her. He praised her much, expressed grief and sorrow. He pointed to a grave, saying: 'That is her grave. She had died." The brothers went to the grave and remained there for a long time making dua. They grieved and cried much. They stayed at the place for many days, and then departed for their home.

When they arrived home and went to sleep, Shaitaan appeared to the eldest brother in a dream. He assumed the form of a traveller. In the dream, Iblees explained the entire episode of his sister, mentioning where her body and the baby's body were. Then Shaitaan appeared in a dream to the other two brothers as well. He informed them precisely as he had informed the eldest brother.

In the morning when the three brothers met, they related their dreams. They were very surprised to learn that all three had seen identical dreams. The eldest said that the dreams were most probably false and satanic, and they should ignore them. The youngest brother, however, insisted that they visit the place to check. This they did.

They went directly to the spot indicated to them in the dream and found the two slaughtered bodies. When they questioned the Raahib, he now had no alternative but to make a confession. The brothers apprehended him and took him to the king. Barseesah was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging.

When he was mounted on the scaffold for execution, Iblees appeared to him and said: "Do you know that I was your companion who had trapped you into fornicating with her and killing her and her baby? If today you obey me, and reject (commit kufr) Allah Who has created you, I shall save your life. Baseerah, panicking and utterly bereft of any spirituality, in desperation obeyed and committed kufr.

After he committed kufr, Iblees abandoned him. Baseerah was executed. In relation to this episode of *Talbeesul Iblees,* the following Qur'aanic aayat was revealed: "…..Just like Shaitaan when he says to a person: *'Commit kufr.'* After the person commits kufr, Shaitaan says:
'Verily, I am free from you. Verily, I fear Allah, The Rabb of all the worlds.'" *(Surah Hashr, Aayat 16)*

This anecdote is an excellent illustration of *Talbeesul Iblees*. It demonstrates how Iblees confuses and deceives people. Even a Saint who had devoted his life to ibaadat became the victim of Shaitaan's deception. By degrees Iblees eroded the spiritual fibre and defences of Barseesah who had fallen into the satanic trap and became the victim of his carnal emotions. Shaitaan is an exceedingly cunning enemy. He was aware that it would have been a futile exercise to attempt to lure and ensnare Barseesah into fornication and the ensuing crimes by

making a direct appeal to his nafs. He spun his plot and with great patience he unfurled his deception gradually. Degree by degree he succeeded in desensitizing Barseesah and eroding his spiritual fibre and moral inhibition to sin.

This is the way in which Iblees lays his traps and ensnares many learned men – molvis and sheikhs – in perpetration of the most heinous crimes against Allah Ta'ala. He appears in religious hues and raiments, and whispers religious ideas and altruistic ideals into the minds of the shallow-minded 'scholars', who quickly fall prey to their nafsaani instincts. He presents to them 'cogent' reasons for ignoring Shar'i rulings and prohibitions for the sake of 'long term' benefits which in reality are nothing but figments of their imagination – satanic mirages. Any act which brings in its wake violations of the Shariah is pure Shaitaani and a classic example of Talbeesul Iblees regardless of the perceived benefits and virtues. There can never be virtue and benefit in an act which is accompanied by haraam misdeeds.